

Washington
Mindfulness
Community

Sangha Reflections

Spring 2000

Newsletter of the Washington Mindfulness Community

New WMC Committees

by Barbara Newell

The WMC Practice Council enjoyed its first meeting on May 1. As you may have seen on the WMC e-mail listserv, we are eager to put together the three standing committees that will be responsible for activities that are important to our life as a sangha.

The Operations Committee will apply the energies needed to make our gatherings on Sunday evenings as supportive as possible to our practice at the Vihara. They will see that the tapes we listen to are ready and in order, that bellmasters are scheduled, and that the tape player, reading and cushions are set up. They also will organize our monthly orientations for newcomers and other events such as the Friends & Family retreat, and maintain our library.

The Communications Committee will promote mindful speech and deep listening by the sangha in several ways. They will seek articles for, edit, lay out, and send our newsletter; maintain our web site and our mailing, sangha directory, and e-mail lists; and receive and forward telephone messages to the sangha.

The Community Care Committee will nurture a strong, supportive sangha by finding real ways for members to "water flowers" and grow through difficulties.

The sangha will benefit greatly from broad participation in these committees, which are a wonderful opportunity for members both to serve the sangha and to deepen their practice. The only requirement is that committee members are asked to make at least a one-year commitment to serve on the committee.

It will be wonderful to see how the WMC grows with these committees, which will be empowered by focus, commitment, and recognition for the actions that mean so much to our life as a sangha. If you would like to contribute some

time, energy and ideas to help our sangha, please call Barbara Newell at 301-650-0646, or e-mail bnewell@dc.infi.net, by May 29. The Practice Council hopes to have the committees in place for the first of the community meetings envisaged by the WMC's new by-laws, on July 9.

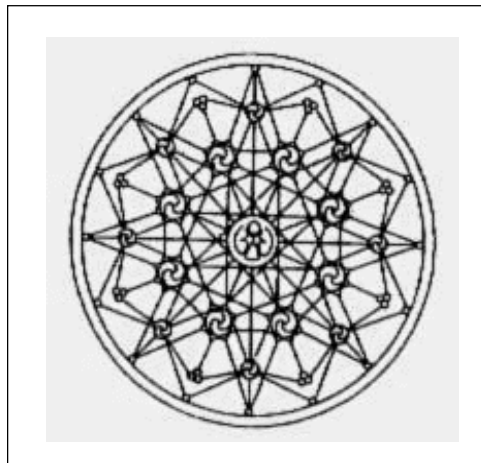
Election 2000 Results

On April 2, the Washington Mindfulness Community had a special meeting to elect new Board Trustees and members of the newly formed Practice Council. The newly elected members of the Board are: **Richard Brady, Irene D'Auria, Jim Schrider & Joseph Byrne.**

The newly elected members of the Practice Council are: **Bill Menza, Richard Brady, Carolyn Bluemle & Barbara Newell.**

These seven people have committed to serve you, the sangha. Please be free to share your ideas and energy with them.

Your ideas are jewels and your participation is precious.



Thây Coming to DC September 14

Tickets for Thich Nhat Hanh's lecture on September 14 at the Washington Hebrew Congregation can be obtained by mail by sending \$20/ticket and a stamped, self-addressed envelope to WMC/Tickets, PO Box 11168, Takoma Park, MD 20913. Checks should be payable to "Washington Mindfulness Community" or to "WMC". Tickets will also be available at a number of area bookstores. A list of ticket outlets will be posted on the WMC website, www.mindfulnessdc.org by early July.

The Washington Mindfulness Community, formed in 1989, is composed of men and women inspired by the teachings of Buddhism and Thich Nhat Hanh, a contemporary Vietnamese Zen Master, peace activist, and writer.

The mission of the Community is to nurture mindfulness, love, and understanding among those who participate in its activities and in the larger society. Members come together to meditate, to deepen our understanding of the practice of mindfulness, to encourage and inspire each other through dharma discussions and mindful actions, to support each other through difficult times and to celebrate the joys and wonders of life. Recognizing that each person's peace and happiness are interwoven with the peace and happiness of others, the WMC offers activities that welcome the children, families, and companions of members. The Community also organizes retreats, lectures, and other public events; supports communities and causes in accord with the Community's mission; and works with groups that relieve suffering through compassionate actions.

"When we say, 'I take refuge in the sangha,' it means we put our trust in a community of fellow practitioners who are solid. A teacher can be important and also the teachings, but friends are the most essential element of the practice. It is difficult or even impossible to practice without a sangha."

From ***Touching Peace*** by Thich Nhat Hanh.

This newsletter is prepared by:
Joseph Byrne <josephb@quixote.org> 301-650-8594

Please get in touch with us with your comments about the newsletter and any information you would like included.

Masthead design and graphics provided by Cindy Sherwood, 301-774-3051. Printing services provided by Community Printing, 202-726-4017.

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If you would like to be added to the **WMC mailing list**, please send your name, address, and phone number, along with a check for \$5 to cover each year's mailing costs, to The Washington Mindfulness Community at PO Box 11168 Takoma Park, MD 20913. (Checks payable to the "Washington Mindfulness Community".)

Minutes from WMC Board Meeting, April 26, 2000

(notes prepared by Irene D'Auria)

- 1) The new board carefully reviewed the WMC Articles of Incorporation and the WMC Bylaws in order to fully and collectively understand the responsibilities defined therein.
- 2) The officers were determined as follows:
 - ❖ Jim Schrider, Chairperson, 2 year term
 - ❖ Richard Brady, Alternate Chair, 2 year term
 - ❖ Joseph Byrne, Treasurer, 1 year term
 - ❖ Irene D'Auria, Secretary, 1 year term
- 3) A preliminary discussion and review of the 1998 application prepared for WMC's filing for Church Status. Review continues, and Joseph is accumulating the required three years of financial records to be presented along with the application.
- 4) The Board considered backing an effort to engage WMC in the resolution to place a Moratorium on Executions. It was decided to put discussion and recommendations re: this issue on the agenda of the next WMC community gathering.
- 5) Richard made a recommendation to invite a Quaker to make a presentation on how Quakers make community decisions. The Board supports this effort. The details will be announced.
- 6) A discussion of the WMC budget especially as it relates to Thây's scheduled visit. More to follow.
- 7) The Board officially and freely offers deep commitment and support to the newly elected Practice Council towards the formation of committees. The Council may look to the Board for leadership and assistance.

Minutes for the WMC Practice Council Meeting, May 1, 2000. (Notes prepared by Carolyn Bluemle)

Present: Carolyn Bluemle, Richard Brady, Barbara Newell.
Absent: Bill Menza, with his ailing mother in Boston

1. The first order of business was to discuss establishing the standing committees. The Council reviewed the functions of each and discussed the number of members required, enough to divide the work, few enough to be able to schedule meetings. The Council considered consensus training for all committee and council members and agreed it would be a good idea. A call for volunteers for membership on these committees will go out by e-mail and in the next WMC newsletter. The committees and their responsibilities:

Communication Committee: Newsletter, E-mail, Outreach, Phone, Website, Community Directory. 5-6 members.

Operations Committee: Tapes, Bell Master, Set up, Library, Newcomers, Friends and Family Retreat. 5-6 members.

Thây Visits the Maryland Correctional Institution at Hagerstown

by Bill Menza

October 16, 1999—For the first time in its history, the state of Maryland was about to open its doors to a renowned Buddhist Zen Master and teacher. The Honorable Thich Nhat Hanh rode in the second of two cars in a caravan from Washington, D.C. to the medium security Maryland Correctional Institution at Hagerstown, Maryland. The glorious autumn day reflected the importance of the event, making the one and one-half hour trip seem as wondrous as the leaves falling from the passing trees.

Emmalou Davis, the president of the prison's Alternatives to Violence Project, had made the arrangements for the visit. She said that dealing with the prison bureaucracy for the visit was like undergoing the "water torture." Prison officials do not want people, especially a person like Thây, visiting their prisons because it can bring them many problems; something could happen to the visitors, and many special security arrangements are needed. Most feared is the possibility that visitors will report on things that could make prison officials look bad or cost them their jobs.

A few months ago Emmalou had read some of Thây's books. And then a few weeks after that she received a call from Bo Lozoff, the Director of the Human Kindness Foundation, to see if she could arrange for Thây's visit to the prison. Bo and his wife Sita have been working for more than 20 years to bring spiritual support to people in prisons. He has visited over 600 prison and has worked with the Alternatives to Violence Project to help prisoners turn away from violence and toward their own spiritual transformation into responsible non-violent members of our communities.

Hagerstown is a rural area with many farms and beautiful landscapes. The posted signs to the correctional facilities brought us to a small gravel road that ends at three prisons: the Maryland Correction Institution at Hagerstown (MCI), the Roxbury Correctional Institution, and the Maryland Correctional Training Center. As we drove down this road, the sun shone on rolling fields of grass on which stand these three separate compounds of concrete and brick buildings. They are surrounded by 50-foot-high fences topped with razor wire, so thick they hide the buildings they embrace. Adding to the foreboding scene were the customary guard towers.

We looked for the stone "castle" that is MCI and turned right on the road to its small reception building and parking lot. As we approached the building we could see guards looking out at us. These brown robed monks and nuns must have been a strange sight for them. I began to think: how will we be accepted and treated by the guards and the prisoners?

We signed in, showed identification papers and were checked

off the pre-approved visitors list. Then we went through the metal detector machine. Even our shoes had to be removed because they set the machine's alarm off. We then passed through the reception building and began walking mindfully toward the entrance gate to the castle. There were 40 of us with Thây. The guard leading us signaled for the chain-linked gate to be opened and we entered the first of many sallyports as we went deeper into the prison. This first sallyport was a cage; when the gate closed behind you, the one in front was opened. This placed us in the front yard of the castle. We continued walking mindfully to the castle door. The sun was warm and there were flowers near the entrance smiling at us. The guard leading us signaled to have the door to the castle opened and we entered a hallway and then were directed to a waiting room.

Accompanying Thây into the prison was Sister Chan Khong, Brother Chan Phap Hoa, Order of Interbeing members Pritam Singh and Bill Menza, and Washington Mindfulness Community associate Larry Ingraham. Sister Chan Thieu Nghiem and Brothers Chan Phap Kham and Chan Phap Thong waited for us at the prison reception area. The other visitors were the prison volunteers with the Alternatives to Violence Project and some of their family members, as well as Sita Lozoff, accompanied by some members of the Human Kindness Foundation, including her son and daughter-in-law. Her husband, Bo, the Foundation's Director, would arrive later, because at that time he was speaking at the National Cathedral. There were also some Maryland prison staff, including Nancy Williams, Director of the Prisoner Volunteer Programs for the state of Maryland.

From the waiting room, we were led through more sallyports and down halls to the prison's chapel-auditorium. As we passed cellblocks, we could see prisoners near their cells looking at us. The cells were very small, the size of a small bathroom. I wondered what it must be like to live in such a tiny place day in and day out. And most likely, as a former prisoner once told me, with a cell mate you would not want to be with in such close quarters. I wondered too about the double bunking that goes on in many prisons to handle the over-capacity of prisoners. All of this is generally hidden from the public.

About 100 prisoners were waiting for us. Thây began his talk by reading a poem that he wrote during the Vietnam war, after the village that Sister Chan Kong comes from was bombed. He said that this poem was made into a song, which Sister Chan Kong then sang.

Thây then went on to summarize and explain 2,500 years of teaching concerning the Buddha's instructions on how to be

A Buddhist at the Barricades by Joseph Byrne

Does a Buddhist belong at the barricades? I had the opportunity to ponder this question on April 16, at the protests during the World Bank/IMF meetings in Washington, DC.

I've been following the issue of globalization for a few years now, since NAFTA and the struggle to scuttle the Multilateral Agreement on Investment in 1998. But it wasn't until November 1999, at the WTO protests in Seattle, that the issue really caught my attention and fired my imagination. In my mind, Seattle was the most exciting thing to happen in terms of nonviolence since 1989, and I didn't want to miss out on the next "Seattle." So when I heard that people were organizing and meeting to prepare for the follow-up to the Seattle protests—the Mobilization for Global Justice (or A16) at the IMF/World Bank meetings—I was determined to get involved.

And I was involved not just as an activist, but as a Buddhist. Why should a Buddhist become involved in these somewhat obscure economic policies and shadowy financial institutions? Because these policies and these institutions, particularly the IMF and World Bank, have caused enormous, unnecessary suffering in the world, with no relief in sight. And because economic globalization has made it much easier for us to benefit from, and be implicated in, this suffering. Globalization is another way of expressing one of the Buddha's central teachings—interconnectedness; we're all in this together, for good or ill. Right now it's mostly ill. The promulgators of "free trade" would have us believe that prosperity for all is just around the corner; instead we're seeing a widening gap between rich and poor. Countries with massive amounts of capital, like the United States, are doing quite well, it's true (though even here there are high levels of economic insecurity); but poor, undeveloped countries are increasingly mired in desperate poverty. We need a globalization of radically engaged compassion to counter the suffering caused by the "new global architecture"; we need to give capitalism a human face, or find something new. That's why Buddhists like myself were at the World Bank/IMF protests: to begin the dialogue, which can only happen if we get the powers-that-be to stop and look deeply at the suffering caused by their institutions.

On the barricades

At 5:45 a.m. on April 16, I was standing on the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and M Street, along with my affinity group from my workplace, the Quixote Center. Our group was part of a larger grouping called the "Justice Cluster" which had taken on the responsibility of "locking down" 18th Street. Here is where we got our first taste of what the day would be like: as we headed out, we heard sirens and a moment later a bus full of delegates for the IMF meetings, escorted by police cars, raced by us, catching us flatfooted. Later we would find out that most of the del-

egates had been bused in before 5 a.m., long before we had mustered our forces, effectively outflanking us and ensuring that the meetings would go on as planned.

When we reached 18th and I Streets, we found two hundred other protesters already there, blockade in place. We joined in, arms linked, until we were convinced that this location was effectively "locked down" and decided to become a "flying squad" and go plug a hole elsewhere. We marched down I street and joined a blockade at 21st Street. Here we stayed until 2:30 p.m. when, the meetings at the IMF in progress, all the blockades gave up their positions and joined a big march headed to the Ellipse, where 50,000 people had gathered for the "permitted" or legal rally.

We created a very effective human blockade. It was our job to make sure no one got through our line. "No one in, no one out, that's what the line is all about," we chanted, and we made good on it. Quite a few late-rising delegates tried to get through our line; none of them succeeded. More controversial was our refusal to let press people pass. We had heard that some delegates were using press credentials to sneak through the line, so we thought it best just to keep them all out. Unfortunately, many people treated the press rudely, and many of the press reacted in kind.

As a nonviolent activist, and a Buddhist, this made me uncomfortable. Though we had all agreed to adhere to a fairly comprehensive nonviolence code, it was clear that people had different interpretations of what nonviolence meant. For some, it seemed verbal abuse was not considered violent. For others, like the anarchists of the "Black Block," property destruction could be considered nonviolent. Often times when people tried to get through our line, and wouldn't just turn around and leave, there were ugly confrontations. When this got

particularly bad, some of us would start chanting "Nonviolence! Nonviolence!" and things would calm down a bit. And this is where it became clear that a few people, strongly dedicated to nonviolence, could change the tone of a demonstration.

I could cite a very dramatic example. There was one tense moment when a great wave of protesters, most of them wearing black, with bandanas over their faces (the "Black Block" anarchists), came rolling down the streets towards us. "Oh, they're on *our* side," I nervously remarked to the person next to me in the line, because as the wave approached I wasn't so sure. One of the people in the wave muttered, "There were just a few cops here a second ago." A moment after that, one of the spokespeople from our line came by and said that we weren't to let these people past us. It became clear that this great black wave hadn't come to reinforce our blockade but rather to break through it, in order to get at the police.

It was ironic, of course, that we were basically protecting the police from some of our unruly, younger fellow (and they were almost all of them *fellow*) protesters. The police, as might be expected, did not appreciate the irony: they donned their gas



by our march, our chants echoing off the walls of office buildings, shouting up to office workers, urging them to join us.

At one point during the march I had what I friend of mine calls a “crystal moment.” I ran into some folks I knew when I was with the Catholic Worker thirteen years before. I remembered all the actions we did together, and the camaraderie we had. I also saw two young protesters, the daughter and son of two protester friends, whom I had known when they were about knee high. It was a great inspiration to see them, and I thought that as unorganized and seemingly ineffectual as we were, as long as we could pass on the torch to the younger generation, there was still hope.

The march ended up at Pennsylvania and I Streets, a couple blocks away from the World Bank/IMF buildings. There was a police barricade there, with a huge police presence behind it. Protesters sat down in front of the barricades, and the police glared at them from the other side. We had gone as far as we were going to go. Protesters might provoke the police (and many tried), but it was pretty clear that nothing else was going to happen there. The delegates had got to their meetings with much less trouble than the day before, and nothing we could do would stop them.

My affinity group stayed there a couple hours, until we heard a rumor that the police were going to start arresting anyone within a two block radius. We decided, as an affinity group, that though we were willing to risk arrest the day before, we saw no point to it today. So, after hearing the Bread and Puppet people do some shape-note singing while waving the great papier-mache hands of a huge sun puppet, we retreated towards the exit designated by the police.

Later on the news, we heard that the stalemate eventually ended with a couple hundred protesters “volunteering” to be arrested by crossing a police line. Many of them remained in jail for the rest of the week, in jail solidarity, in very bad conditions. Meanwhile, many of the organizers of A16 were already talking about organizing protests at this years political conventions, and in Prague, where the IMF/World Bank meetings would be held next.

Onward

Both the police and the protesters claimed victory after A16. The police, through infiltration, intimidation, and crafty tactical moves, had made sure the IMF/World Bank meetings would go forward and managed to prevent another Seattle-style police riot. The protesters had pulled off the biggest protest against the IMF/World Bank in history and had created a highly effective blockade (though with a couple significant holes which the police used to full effect) with a relatively small number of people (15,000 is my estimate). We had caused a major disruption to business as usual in the nation’s capital, and were front page news for a week. We also got the World Bank/IMF to take up the rhetoric of debt reduction (cynically, perhaps) and, as Todd Gitlin argued in the *New York Times*, helped create space for dissidents within the World Bank and IMF to begin working for meaningful change. Finally, like Seattle did for the WTO, A16 effectively put structural adjustment and other World Bank/IMF policies on the radar screens of the people—not just the elites—of the United States. Secrecy, which has been the greatest weapon of the new global architects, has been partially diminished and the silence punctured.

So what is the work now? To continue the dialogue; to transform unjust institutions, such as the World Bank and the IMF, into vehicles of true, just development. It seems to me that this is a vital time for Buddhists to get involved in these issues. Now more

than ever, we need people who can listen, without agendas or ideology, to help bring all sides to a consensus. Now is the time for those who have attuned their ears and hearts to the cries of great suffering to help create a more compassionate global economic order.

So, I return to my initial question: Do Buddhists belong on the barricades? I would have to say, definitely, yes. But we also belong in the halls of power, and in the slums of the poor, and in the living rooms of middle-class America. As the Dalai Lama has said, “Compassion is the radicalism of this age.” With compassion, we can create a “Beloved Community” (Martin Luther King’s phrase) to replace the current empire of greed. “Skillful” Buddhists are needed for this to come about, to teach others how they might cultivate the skills of deep looking and compassionate action themselves. The furious and festive spirit of Seattle, and A16, continues, and Buddhists are invited to come along, bringing their equanimity and dancing shoes.

Practice Council Meeting (cont. from page 2)

Community Care Committee: Positive work as well as remedial. Organizing activities as well as resources for those in trouble or in discord. May involve some training in listening. 5-8 members.

2. The Council discussed the possibility of endorsing the moratorium on the death penalty. We discussed whether it is political and raised the question of how to dance with that. We also wondered how other mindfulness communities have dealt with these issues and how *Thây* handled such things in Vietnam.

3. *Thây*’s visit: Co-ordination will be ad hoc. One coordinator and lots of organizers with discrete roles. We need to find people by talking with regular participants in the community.

Co-sponsors: Still Water Mindfulness Practice Center, Mindfulness Practice Center of Fairfax, and Insight Meditation Community of Washington. Tickets for the event will go on sale around July 1.

4. The Council set a tentative date for the next WMC Community Meeting for July 9.

Save the Date: August 9, 2000

On this day, the 55th anniversary of the bombing of Nagasaki, the Buddhist Peace Fellowship (BPF) is organizing a mindful presence at the Pentagon. The action is part of the People’s Campaign for Nonviolence, sponsored by the Fellowship of Reconciliation, beginning July 1. Please join us! For more information on the BPF action, or to join the newly formed BPF-DC Chapter, contact Joseph Byrne, 202-722-1911. For more information about the People’s Campaign, call 202-332-6558, or go to <www.forusa.org>

Joseph Byrne, a member of the WMC board, has asked the community to consider passing a resolution calling for a moratorium on executions. This is part of a larger campaign initiated by an organization called Equal Justice USA, which is a non-partisan effort (including some pro-death penalty adherents) with the aim of creating the necessary public space for a fruitful dialogue on the merits and demerits of the death penalty. With this in mind, the WMC will discuss the proposed resolution at the next Public Gathering on July 9. The proposed resolution is printed below.

This wording from the 10th Mindfulness Training of the Order of Interbeing may help us in our reflection: “We are determined not to use the Buddhist community for personal gain or profit or transform our community into a political instrument. A spiritual community should, however, take a clear stand against oppression and injustice and should strive to change the situation without engaging in partisan conflicts.”

Buddhist Resolution Calling for a Moratorium on Executions

WHEREAS Buddhism is a religion and a philosophy that calls for a commitment to nonviolence:

- ❖ The Buddha’s First Precept enjoins the disciple to protect and cherish life, in all its forms—including the life of a murderer.
- ❖ The Dhammapada says “Everyone fears punishment; everyone loves life, as you do. Therefore do not kill or cause to kill,” *The Dhammapada, Chapter 10*.

WHEREAS there is ample evidence that the death penalty is applied in a racist manner:

- ❖ In 1987, in *McCleskey v. Kemp*, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to act on data demonstrating the continuing reality of racial bias.
- ❖ In 1990, the U.S. General Accounting Office reported “a pattern of evidence indicating racial disparities in charging, sentencing and imposition of the death penalty.”
- ❖ Nationwide, 82% of those put to death had been convicted of murdering a white person even though people of color are the victims in more than half of all homicides.

WHEREAS death sentences are reserved for the poor:

- ❖ About 90% of those persons facing capital charges cannot afford their own attorney.
- ❖ No state has met standards developed by the American Bar Association (ABA) for appointment, performance and compensation of counsel for indigent prisoners.

WHEREAS prisoner appeals have been severely curtailed, increasing the risk of the execution of innocent people:

- ❖ In a series of rulings since 1991, the Supreme Court has drastically restricted the rights of death row prisoners to appeal their convictions and death sentences in federal courts, even in cases where prisoners present compelling evidence of innocence.
- ❖ In 1996, new legislation drastically limited federal court review of death penalty appeals, and gutted public funding of legal aid services for death row prisoners.

WHEREAS the ABA has concluded that administration of the death penalty is “a haphazard maze of unfair practices with no internal consistency” and has called for a moratorium on executions.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this congregation calls on the Governor and our state representatives, and President Clinton and our representatives in Congress, **to institute a moratorium on executions** at least until policies and procedures are implemented which:

- ❖ Ensure that death penalty cases are administered fairly and impartially, in accordance with basic due process,
- ❖ Minimize the risk of that innocent persons may be executed, and
- ❖ Prevent the execution of mentally retarded persons and person who were under the age of 18 at the time of their offenses.

Be it further resolved that copies of this resolution shall be forwarded to our Governor and our state representatives and President Clinton and our representatives in Congress.

Ongoing Events:

WMC Meditation and Dharma Discussion: every Sunday evening at 7-9:15 PM, at the Buddhist Vihara at 5017 16th Street, N.W. in Washington, D.C. Sitting and walking meditation and a brief taped dharma talk by Thich Nhat Hanh are followed by a discussion. Everyone is welcome.

WMC New Member Orientation: last Sunday of every month, 6-7 p.m. is a time to ask questions about sitting and walking meditation, bells, gathas and other aspects of Mindfulness practice. Open to all, but especially for newcomers. Informal orientations can be arranged for other Sundays.

Mindfulness Practice Center in Oakton, VA: Morning Sitting & Walking Meditation: Monday to Friday 8:15-9:15 a.m. Noon meditation: Tuesday & Thursday, 12-12:45 p.m. Afternoon Deep Relaxation/Stress Releasing: Monday 3:00-3:45 p.m., Tuesday & Thursday 3:30-4:15 p.m. Mindful Movement: Tuesday & Thursday, 4:15-5 p.m. Children's Program: Monday 4:00-4:45 p.m. Thursday Evening Sitting & Talk on Practice of Mindfulness in Daily Life: Thursday 7:30-9:00 p.m. Please call 703-938-1377 to confirm.

Stillwater Mindfulness Practice Center: Sitting meditation and reading every Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings from 6:30 am to 7:30 am; sitting meditation and other mindfulness practices Wednesday evenings. All at Crossings in Takoma Park, MD. Call Mitchell Ratner for details: 301-270-8353 or email him at: msratner@erols.com.

Capitol Hill Mindfulness Group: every Wednesday evening from 6:15 to 7:15 p.m. at the Dancing Heart Center, 221 5th St., NE, Washington, DC (just off Stanton Square near Mass Ave.). 202-544-0841. For more info: 202-547-4569.

Columbia Mindfulness Group: First Monday of month, 7-8:30 p.m.. Contact: Judy Colligan, 410-730-4712.

Bethesda Mindfulness Group: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 7-8 a.m. For directions and more info, call: 301-897-3648.

DC Meditation Group: every 2nd & 4th Wednesday from 7:30-9:30 p.m. Meditation, discussion & videos on various topics and teachers. Contact Jim Hughes: 202-265-5985.

Saturday Morning Meditation: 8:30 - 10:15 a.m.,

Baltimore Fresh Breeze Mindfulness Sangha in Towson, MD. Contact Carol Fegan: 410-583-7798.

The Mintwood Zendo, a sangha for gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered Buddhists, meets every Wednesday at 6:30 p.m., at the Friends Meeting-house in Washington, DC. Call 202-332-9261 for more details.

Weekly Sitting Group in **Northern Virginia** facilitated by Stig Regli: Sundays, 7:30 - 9 p.m. 4311 N. 2nd Road, #1, Arlington, VA. Contact Stig: 703-528-1944, stig@ix.netcom

Vipassana Meditation Classes, led by Tara Brach: Wednesdays, 7:30 - 9:00 p.m. Classes include meditation instruction, group sitting, and dharma talks. River Road Unitarian Church, 6301 River Road, Bethesda, MD (Enter from Whittier Boulevard). Classes are held in the main sanctuary. A \$5 donation is appreciated. Please bring a sitting cushion and a zabuton or blanket. Chairs are available. For more info, contact Dori Langevin at (301) 562-7000 or meditate@imcw.org. A brief orientation is held each Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.

Vipassana Meditation Classes led by Luisa Montero-Diaz and Lynn Kelly: Sundays, 7 - 8:15 p.m. at Willow Street Yoga Center, 6930 Carroll Ave., Takoma Park, MD. Contact Luisa: 301-891-2780, luisana@aol.com or Lynn: 301-530-4363, LKelly@nih.com

Being Peace: Days of Mindfulness with Anh-Huong and Thu Nguyen. We come together once a month to learn and practice the art of mindful living as a community. The purpose of mindfulness practice is to experience that happiness is possible right here and now. Join us at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton, Virginia. Space is limited so call now at 703-938-1377. Suggested donation is \$30 to \$50. **Upcoming dates: June 24, July 12, August 12.**

Mindfulness Days with the Boat of Compassion (Thuyen Tu), a Vietnamese zen group practice in the tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh: First Saturday most months, at the Buddhist Congregational Church of America, 5401 16th St. NW, Washington, DC. Meditation from 10 a.m. - noon; vegetarian lunch afterwards. To confirm, contact Anh-Huong Nguyen: 703-938-9606, Que Tran: 301-589-8234, or Vien Nguyen: 301-294-7966.