



October ~ December, 2017

Volume 7, Issue 4

Guest Teachers Schedule

Oct 1	Oren J Sofer	
Oct 8	Oren J Sofer	
Oct 15	Oren J Sofer	3rd Sunday
Oct 22	Oren J Sofer	
Oct 29	Dawn Scott	
Nov 5	Lisa Dale Miller	
Nov 12	Shaila Catherine	
Nov 19	Phillip Moffitt	3rd Sunday
Nov 26	Donald Rothberg	
Dec 3	Donald Rothberg	
Dec 10	Donald Rothberg	
Dec 17	Reflections & Intentions	3rd Sunday
Dec 24	No Sangha	
Dec 31	No Sangha	

For more information about our guest teachers go to www.marinsangha.org.

Update From the Board

Dear Marin Sangha Members ~

For a while now I have wanted to write about the Marin Sangha Board itself, how it came into being, and its roots in the early days of Marin Sangha. As we are in the midst of holding our first open nominations for new Board of Directors, this seems to be the appropriate time to do so.

Phillip Moffitt started Marin Sangha (then known as San Rafael Sangha) in the summer of 1998. I first visited the sangha at the Turtle Island Yoga Studio in August of 1999. At that time, Phillip was assisted by two sangha members: his good friend Brooke Brown, who did the setup and recording/transcribing of Dharma talks, and his employee and friend Kathryn Arnold, who took on much of the sangha's organizational and administrative work. Doug Licht soon joined in to help Brooke with the Sunday night logistics, and Phillip and his office staff at Life Balance Institute shouldered the many day-to-day responsibilities, including handling leases, paying the rent, and other business duties.

Eventually, Phillip invited a small group of sangha members to implement whatever wasn't done through his office and to perform such tasks as planning sangha daylongs and social gatherings. This original core group included Art Jolly, Barbara McHugh, Bill Coffin, Brooke, Kathryn, Veta Jacquelin, Doug, Brenda Walsh and Denise Scatena.

In 2004, when Marin Sangha moved to the Yoga Center of Marin in Corte Madera, the core group evolved into a steering committee and began to take on a larger role. A subgroup of the Committee was responsible for finding and vetting the new site; Committee members also wrote setup procedures, organized the weekly post-sangha tea, taught a "Basics" course for new yogis, and initiated book study groups and a Dharma Buddy program. Somewhere in this time period, Arlette Cohen was added to the Committee.

Marin Sangha hummed along for many years in this operational mode. The Committee organized the first All Sangha Meeting, worked with Phillip to create a New Member packet, compiled a reading list, set up annual picnics, handled the logistics of the annual daylong, and performed many other tasks, unbeknownst to most of the rest of the sangha.

Somewhere in the late oughts (2008 or 2009?), Mary Kelly, Cory Bytof, Sara Sacksteder and I were invited to serve on the Committee; I think this was truly my first knowledge that such an entity existed. We met a handful of times a year, mostly at Phillip's request, continuing to provide input and energy to sangha activities.

In the latter half of 2013, an expanded Committee met to take on the daunting task of handling the transition of Marin Sangha from a teacher-led structure to an autonomous sangha-led organization. This was a frightening proposition for many in the sangha: would Marin Sangha survive without the infrastructure support Phillip and Life Balance Institute had supplied for so many years? Would Phillip remain as our spiritual

teacher? What would happen if we couldn't make the rent?

As the Committee had lost several members over the years, a few more were added: Wayne Cooper, Liz Weiner, Mary Paige and Dianne Fruin. Wayne, Bill and Mary Kelly took on the responsibility of incorporating Marin Sangha. This work included creation of our Articles of Incorporation and the Bylaws of Marin Sangha. Directors for the newly incorporated Marin Sangha came from volunteers drawn from the Committee: Art Jolly (President), Linda Howerton-Pritchett (Treasurer), Bill Coffin (Secretary), Barbara McHugh, Mary Kelly, Mary Paige, Sara Sacksteder and Wayne Cooper. Several months after our incorporation as a 501(c)3 non-profit, our invaluable Brenda Walsh herded our application through the IRS process, and we achieved church status as well. This meant that not only were donations to Marin Sangha tax deductible but also, as a church, we were not required to file any tax forms at year-end (this was a BIG relief for me as the first Treasurer!).

Since our official incorporation in January, 2014, we have had two directors leave (Wayne Cooper and Mary Paige) and have invited three other sangha members to join the Board: Cory Bytof, Dianne Fruin and Bob Harlow. In the fall of 2016, Art retired as President, Linda took on the President role, and Cory became the new Treasurer. Early this year, recognizing that many of us would be completing our fourth year as Board Directors come January, we realized that we needed a system for transitioning directors retiring from the Board, and, more importantly, we also needed a way to bring on new directors. In response to requests from the sangha for greater transparency, the Board Transition Committee (Cory, Mary K, Sara and I) proposed to the Board a nomination process that would allow any sangha member to apply. I am excited that we made this opportunity to serve the sangha available to all members. To some it may appear intimidating; it certainly was when we took our first steps as a Board. We, as the current directors, realize that we have done a lot of growing into these positions over the past four years...we've stubbed our toes more than once...and you all have been very patient with us. For any errors, blunders or clumsy attempts that we have committed as a Board, we ask for your forgiveness and bow to your tolerance. Our intention has always been to be in service to the sangha, and we begin each Board meeting with bringing this intention back to the forefront of our efforts.

For those of you considering the possibility of serving on the Board, we truly welcome your interest and any questions you might have. Although our by-laws require us to re-elect current and new directors at our January meeting (a director's term is set at two years), the by-laws also allow for the addition of directors at any time throughout the year. So if the timing isn't right for you, or you need more time to consider applying, understand that you can do so at any time throughout the year. We encourage you to do so! Although being a Director takes some effort, we on the Board agree that helping the sangha continue to flourish has been well worth it for us all.

With deep appreciation to Phillip Moffitt for creating Marin Sangha, and to the many yogis who have contributed to its success for these (almost) twenty years.

In Service to the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha,
Linda Howerton-Pritchett, President
Marin Sangha Board of Directors

[NOTE: Dates, names and activities referenced above have been cobbled together from emails, notes and frail memories; any errors are mine and are not intended to omit, demean or in any way lessen the impact of any individual upon Marin Sangha]

Marin Sangha 3rd Quarter Financial Update - 2017

The Sangha continues to be in good shape financially. Deep gratitude for your heartfelt Dana. This allows us to continue to function effectively as a nonprofit and to be able to offer two annual retreat offerings to Sangha members.

Our quarterly account statements are as follows:

Checking:

July 1 beginning balance:	\$2,692.28
September 29 ending balance:	\$3,512.32

Savings:

July 1 beginning balance:	\$6,685.16
September 29 ending balance:	\$6,686.83

Income for Sangha is typically from Sunday night Dana along with Dana from daylong retreats offered. This quarter Bill Coffin donated his teacher Dana to the Sangha as well.

Dana for Sangha helps to pay for rent, insurance, web site hosting, and retreat offerings, as well as for small

office needs and the like. Monthly rent for our Sunday evenings often costs between \$600-\$850 per month.

If you ever have questions about the budget, please feel free to reach out to me in person at Sangha or by email at cmx@sonic.net.

In Gratitude,
Cory Bytof, Treasurer

Board Meeting Dates

The dates for upcoming Board meetings through the end of the quarter are: **Oct. 22, Nov. 12, Dec. 10.**

Marin Sangha News

Marin Sangha Compassionate Action Committee

The Board of Directors has asked that a Compassionate Action Committee be established to suggest guidelines and respond to requests for Sangha resources. Sangha resources include Sunday night announcements, Yahoo Group, Facebook, the Newsletter, Marin Sangha Website, the back table and the resources of individual Sangha members.

A few examples of past activities supported by Sangha are Habitat For Humanity, California Coastal Cleanup Day, funding Mo's schooling and the Food Empowerment Project drive for school supplies for children.

A few of the questions that led to the decision to form the committee include: Can I ask the sangha to support a non-profit or cause that I am interested in supporting? Should I be worried about sangha donation burnout?

The first meeting of the Committee will be held on October 20, 2017. Bob Harlow, Deborah Temple, Patti Breitman and Sara Sacksteder have volunteered to form the committee and will be happy to hear your questions and any recommendation you have for the committee.

Marin Sangha Directory

The Marin Sangha Directory is now available for all members. A copy of the Directory is on the information table or available from Lucia Chaudron. If you are already in the Directory, **please check and verify that the information you provided is correct.**

We will up date the directory quarterly. So, if you would like to add your name to the Directory, please complete the sign-up sheet on the table or contact Lucia at lmchaudron@comcast.net.

Lucia Chaudron

Dear Sangha Members:

Thanks to everyone who brought school supplies for the children of farm workers during the summer. This

annual drive is the work of the Food Empowerment Project (FoodIsPower.org). Here is a link to its writeup about the campaign. It includes a link to photos of the packing party and the happy recipients of our generosity. <http://appetiteforjustice.blogspot.com/2017/09/they-were-lined-around-block-update-of.html>

Here is a brief excerpt:

This year was different than those in the past—for our drive and for those who we seek to support.

The vast majority of the farm workers we support are undocumented. They have always lived their lives with some fear but nothing like they are experiencing at present. Farm workers are scared to leave their homes, go out to buy food, or to walk their children to school. This is a climate of fear that they have always lived with but has been exacerbated by an uptick in hate speech and a person who seeks to have them deported following through on his threats.

Initially we received fewer school supplies than we did last year (until we put out a call letting you, our wonderful supporters, know), and when I was asked why I thought we received less, I realized that there are so many vulnerable communities being impacted right now, and those with a big heart are probably being spread thin.

Again, abundant thanks to all who helped. With gratitude,

Deborah Temple and Patti Breitman

Awakening Through The Nine Bodies

by Phillip Moffitt

On Saturday, September 16, 2017, a group of fifty or so gathered at Book Passage in Corte Madera on a fine afternoon to hear our own Phillip Moffitt talk about his new book, *Awakening Through The Nine Bodies*. A dozen of us sangha members were happily among them.

It was an interesting, engaging, enlivening presentation. Some years ago, Phillip made a journey to India for help with a particular issue, where he was led to encounter Sri Swami Balyogi Premvarni, who teaches in the ancient Himalayan forest tradition in an out-of-the-way sanctuary. Hoping to solve his specific problem, Phillip entered a new world of instruction, receiving many years of teachings from this special and unusual man. These teachings are now collected for us in *Awakening Through The Nine Bodies*, with beautiful, colorful illustrations created by Balyogi himself, visually portraying his concepts and insights to us.

Phillip will lead a residential retreat teaching *The Nine Bodies* in May of 2018 at Spirit Rock.

I recommend the book, if only for the transporting beauty of its art work, and in hopes of a group of us studying it together soon.

Deborah Temple

Sangha Member Contributions

PARAMI ENERGY

The quality of energy must be viewed in the context of other spiritual qualities, or paramis -- such as wisdom, to be discussed in the next newsletter -- which provide the balance needed. I find a nice metaphor for energy is imagining a flame on a gas stove...too low and food will stay un-browned and tepid, taking a really long time to cook. When the flame is too high, the food will burn and be wasted. So the spiritual quality of energy is to burn moderately and persistently at just the right level.

When I apply the right amount of energy to the other spiritual qualities that make for a happy, peaceful life, I am willing to persist in being kind, generous, wise, patient and truthful each day and each moment of each day. This takes some real doing for me, as it is easy for me to forget and plunge into daily life without this balance.

One of the ways that my energy burns too high is when I do paperwork for my business. I sit at the computer and get carried away with the thought that I *must* get it all done now. Although I set my timer with the intent of taking breaks to protect my energy and my neck and shoulders, I end up pushing through and ignoring the timer. I can get away with this sometimes, but then exhaustion and tense neck muscles let me know that I have pushed too hard and caused myself harm. Certainly not a wise stewarding of my energy! I have not been patient or kind to myself in my hurry to get it done.

The flow of energy takes other courses as well. Sometimes I am sluggish, and I find that taking a long in-breath and short outbreath will brighten up my energy. When I am agitated and my energy is not well-modulated, then the opposite method of taking a short in-breath and a long, slow outbreath will calm down that kind of energy. I very much like the idea of being a good steward of the life energy allotted me, allowing it to flow through my body and mind in a gentle natural manner.

Mary Paige



Cartoon by Alice Lucas

FORM IS EMPTINESS.... EMPTINESS IS FORM

When I started exploring Dharma back around 1986-87, I spent my first several years practicing at Green Gulch Farm, a small paradise and practice center just above Muir Beach. Baking, chanting, carrying incense, hitting the bells or the wooden instruments calling people to practice, no matter how my Sunday morning there started, it always ended with the Heart Sutra, which we read together, in unison. One of the lines in this sutra is "form is emptiness, emptiness is form." Naturally, when our dharma teacher a few weeks back, our own Bill Coffin, asked us to form small groups and talk about the meaning of this phrase, I was delighted! And our small group had a wonderful exchange of questions and interpretations. It was satisfying, and it was fun! Only just a few days later, after contacting an aging friend in New York to see how she was doing, I received this back from her -- and I vibrated with what seemed like magical synchronicity. With the recent solar eclipse, the storms and quakes besetting our planet, and the inimitable T.S. Eliot version of "form is emptiness...." below, I felt the beauty and wonder of the cosmos and the mystery we're all a part of. Please enjoy.

At the still point of the turning world.
Neither flesh nor fleshless;
Neither from nor towards;
at the still point, there the dance is,
But neither arrest nor movement.
And do not call it fixity,
Where past and future are gathered.

Neither movement from nor towards,
Neither ascent nor decline.
Except for the point, the still point,
There would be no dance,
and there is only the dance.

~ T.S. Eliot ~

(excerpt from *Burnt Norton, The Four Quartets*)

Deborah Temple



Mo and his Truck

Time to Stand Up

I highly recommend a book by Thanissara called *Time to Stand Up*. In the book she talks about the dire need to help our planet and calls on practitioners to get off the cushion and take action. *Time to Stand Up's* subtitle is *An Engaged Buddhist Manifesto for Our Earth*. She examines the Buddha's awakening through the lens of feminine energy and argues that our planet needs all men and women to focus on this fierce, feminine energy to help stave off looming disaster.

Tara Brach said, "For those who long to find in Buddhism a path dedicated to compassion in action, there is now a book that can illuminate the way. With clarity and deeply penetrating insight, Thanissara follows the contours of the Buddha's awakening as a catalyst for the evolution of consciousness and, inextricably related, as a caring agent of human and social transformation. . . ."

Ruth King described it thus: "Bold and authentic, passionately benevolent . . . profound insights . . . wise, radical, practical. . . ."

I read it through and immediately began it again. It helps me to feel less a victim of our times and more of a player in calming the raging storms within and around us.

The book is in paperback from North Atlantic Books and costs \$17.95.

Patti Breitman

An Up-Date from Jacques Verduin about Mo Moore

Last year in the Oct. Newsletter we printed a letter from Edgar "Mo" Moore after he had graduated from Truck Driving School. You may recall that Marin Sangha held a fund raiser to help Mo follow his dreams. Enjoy the up-date below from Jacque and Sangha member Dianne Fruin.

About 2 years ago, Jacques Verduin was guest teacher at Marin Sangha. Jacques was accompanied by a former San Quentin inmate introduced as Mo, and together they described the life-altering prison program led by Jacques,

called GRIP- Guiding Rage Into Power. The program is run by the non-profit Insight-Out, which guides prison inmates on a healing journey to transform suffering into compassion and understanding. At that time, Mo talked about the daunting challenges of re-entering the world after 25 years of incarceration, and he expressed his gratitude for learning meditation and how to watch his mind instead of reacting to emotions as he had in the past. Marin Sangha members were moved to help Mo and launched a fundraising effort called "Opening Our Hearts to Help Mo," which successfully raised \$2900 to send Mo to truck driving school.

In a recent update from Jacques we were very happy to learn that Mo's reentry is going beautifully:

Mo is extremely grateful for his new life and all of your efforts to support him and he wants you all to know how well he is doing with the opportunity you granted to him.

He is in a good relationship, moved into an apartment from the halfway house he was in and has a steady job. After he got his license at A1 Trucking, he actually was hired there as an instructor! That's over one year ago now. (I guess everyone who meets Mo falls in love with him....)

Next weekend he'll be driving to L.A to a family reunion, after 29 years since he was there.

What a wonderful thing your sangha did for this man...

Our mindfulness-based GRIP Program has expanded to serve 500 men in 5 prisons this year.

Over the last 5 years, 74 GRIP graduates have been released and zero % has returned to prison.

It is a true honor to provide access to mindfulness and emotional intelligence to a group of people that might otherwise not have access to it and to employ former prisoners to teach their brothers and sisters who are still incarcerated.

Thanks so much, on behalf of Mo and myself.

Jacques.

www.insight-out.org



Mo at his Graduation

Gratitude for the generosity of this wonderful Sangha.
Blessings to us all

Dianne Fruin

Member Profile

We wish to thank Sandra Berger for this issue's Member Profile.

How did you get interested in Buddhism?

In my late teens when I was trying to make sense of the world (and myself) a friend recommended a book I called *Siddhartha*. It was very moving and touched my heart. I started a meditation practice.

How did you happen to begin coming to Marin Sangha?

I had been going to Spirit Rock on Monday nights and had heard there was a sangha in Corte Madera at the dojo location. I started attending, and I enjoyed hearing Phillip speak every week.

What would you like other sangha members to know about you, such as basic demographics, career, family information, etc.?

I went back to school in later life to fulfill a desire to be of service to others in a meaningful way. A difficult divorce led me to address my own issues and why I decided to become a psychotherapist. Faced with raising my child alone, I put my career on hold. I finally returned to graduate school after many hours of internships; I now have a private practice, where I see individuals with



Sandy Berger

anxiety and depression. I incorporate mindfulness and Buddhist practices, if the client is open to this.

My partner Dale and I are engaged and enjoy coming to sangha together. My son, now grown and married, has two sons, and I am a proud grandmother!

What are the things that you value and appreciate about Marin Sangha?

I love coming to Marin Sangha on Sundays and discussing the talk after with Dale. When I can, I like to come early to help set up. I especially like the various teachers we have.

How would you like Marin Sangha to grow?

I would like to see younger people attend, and I'd like more time to have discussions with members each Sunday.

Sandra's Contact information:

Sandra Berger,
Marriage & Family Therapist
Focus: Anxiety & Trauma
415.322.0822
sandyberger@gmail.com

Anyone may submit a profile or ask any questions about this project by calling Mary Paige, at 415-771-8767, or email her at: drmarypaige@gmail.com

Ongoing Activities

New Members

If you are new to Marin Sangha, welcome! More information about Marin Sangha can be found at our website www.marinsangha.org. You are also welcome to join the Marin Sangha Yahoo Group or go to our FaceBook page as other ways to find out more about our Sangha. We look forward to seeing you again.

Sunday Setup and Closing

Each Sunday three people are needed to set up the room prior to Sangha, and as many as are available are

needed for restoring the room after Sangha. Please join us - a little Sangha serving the big Sangha! Nick Rozsa, at nkrozsa74@gmail.com, is available to help. You can meet him at Sangha or by emailing him at the above link.

Sunday Dinner

A group of members continue to enjoy each other’s company after Sangha by having dinner together at a local restaurant. Want to join us? Contact Bill Coffin after Sangha.

Third Sunday Social Gathering

Celebrate Sangha! Come early for Third Sunday Social at 5:00 PM. Bring snack food and something to drink if you wish. Reminders will be sent out ahead of time. Dates are: **Oct. 15, Nov. 19, Dec. 17**

Sangha Website

Don’t forget the Marin Sangha website at marinsangha.org. There you will find the schedule for upcoming guest teachers, the current copy of the newsletter, additional news, and, above all, the recorded dharma talks for each Sunday’s meeting. There is also information on joining our Yahoo group, Facebook page, and email list. Thanks to Bill Coffin, our webmaster, for putting it together and maintaining it. Check it out!

Marin Sangha on Facebook

If you would like to join, just log on to your Facebook account and type in Marin Sangha in the search bar. Once on the Marin Sangha Facebook page click the green “join” button. Bill Coffin or Mary Kelly will approve your request, usually within the day. There is also a link to the Facebook page on the Marin Sangha website at www.marinsangha.org.

Marin Sangha Board of Directors

- Linda Howerton-Pritchett: President
- Cory Bytof: Treasurer
- Bill Coffin (non-voting): Secretary
- Dianne Fruin
- Bob Harlow
- Art Jolly
- Mary Kelly
- Barbara McHugh
- Sara Sacksteder

Committees	Contacts
Circle of Caring	Mary Paige drmarypaige@gmail.com
Chanting Group	Linda Howerton-Pritchett l.howerton@sbcglobal.net
Dharma Buddies	Alice Lucas tuffylucas@gmail.com
Committees and Groups	Lucia Chaudron lmchaudron@comcast.net
Newsletter	Lucia Chaudron lmchaudron@comcast.net
New Members	Shiah Cherney shiahcherney@yahoo.com
Sangha Service Projects	Deborah Temple deborah temple@rocketmail.com
Sangha Yahoo Group	Linda Howerton-Pritchett l.howerton@sbcglobal.net
Sunday Announcement	Mary Kelly momkelly@comcast.net
Sunday Set-up & Closing	See notebook on the Information Table
Technical Support	Bill Coffin bille@eclipsoid.com

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