



Insight Meditation Society

Sangha News – May 2012

Committing to Our Vision



From Bob Agoglia, Executive Director: This summer, we'll be celebrating IMS's 10th annual People of Color Retreat. Even though this course is one of the most popular mainstays of our retreat calendar, we still need to do much more to fulfill our vision of true diversity.

People of color continue to be inadequately represented in our community. So we are undertaking a quest to ensure there will always be a place at the table for people of color on IMS's Board, within our teaching faculty, on our staff, among our volunteers, and in our halls at all retreats. Under the direction of our Board, a Diversity Work Group is currently preparing a three-year action plan to bring this to fruition.

If we can include the full range of voices in shaping IMS's culture, we can offer a vibrant refuge for generations to come in this increasingly diverse nation and world. Stay tuned for progress reports.



News Worth Noting

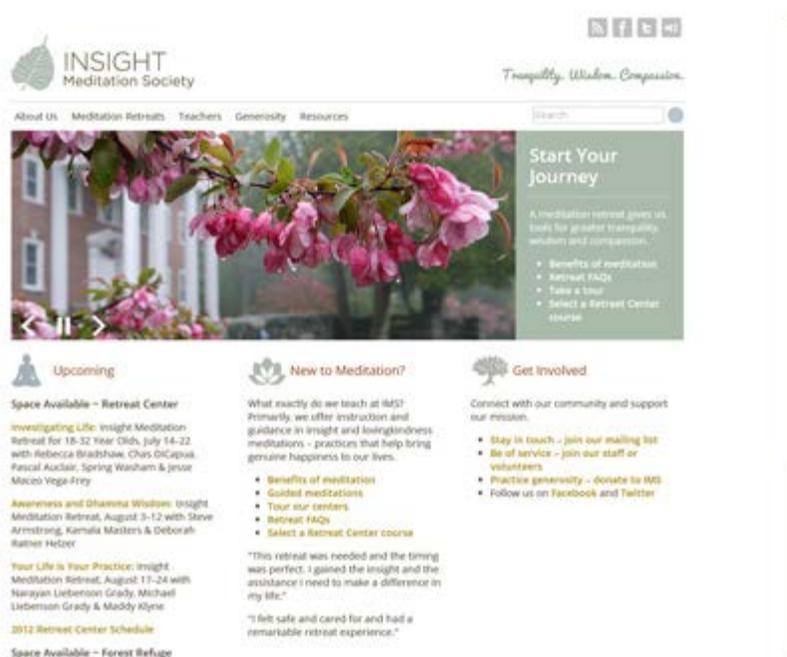
A New-Look Website - We hope you enjoy exploring IMS's new [website](#)! Our goals for it are threefold: to keep our community in touch with dharma news and IMS developments, to help those new to meditation learn more about its benefits and our programs, and to offer resources to support practice.

Additionally, as more and more of us connect to the internet via mobile devices, we want to provide easier access to the site for anyone using them.

You might like to take a look at our [Recipes](#) section (more will be added over time), our new [Weather](#) page, a range of [Virtual Tours](#) and [Audio](#) offerings, and of course the [Retreat Center](#) and [Forest Refuge](#) schedules.

The new site will now also serve as a foundation for future features, such as videos and blogs.

We welcome your feedback.



New Construction Timeline - When our major project to construct a new dormitory and to renovate the Catskills was originally conceived, it was estimated that it would take nine months to complete.

But now, based on detailed architectural and engineering plans recently completed, we calculate a more exact timeframe to be 12 months.

We look forward to breaking ground in early September. Then it will take nine months, till late May 2013, to build the dorm and connector. Following that, the Catskills renovations will begin in June of that year, with all work completed by the end of August 2013.

Currently, some preparations are underway between retreats.



Building up the foundation for a new access road on Retreat Center grounds. This will serve for dropping off luggage at the new dorm and Annex, as well as for delivery and emergency vehicles.



Preparing the Annex for the covered walkway that will connect all three dorms to the rest of the Retreat Center facility.

Front Entrance Accessibility - For those of us with mobility issues, entering the Retreat Center's main building can present a challenge. It means either negotiating the

portico steps and heavy front door, or, for anyone in a wheelchair, taking a roundabout route down the service driveway and coming in through the back.

Our current Spring Appeal aims to remedy this unwelcoming situation. We are raising funds to build a ramp into the front patio and to substantially improve the entryway, so that everyone will have direct, easy access on arrival to the entire facility. In a very practical way, this improvement will make the teachings more easily available to *all*.

The work will be completed while our major construction project is underway. By carrying out this improvement while the necessary equipment and labor is already on site, we'll save considerable expense and minimize disruption to future retreats.



Fresher Air - A new air circulating and conditioning system for the Retreat Center meditation hall is almost complete. It's designed to bring in fresh air throughout the year - no more cracking open windows for better air flow during the winter months. No more wasting precious heat!

We expect the system to be ready by the time summer fully arrives. On particularly hot and humid days, it will also cool the air.



Behind-the-scenes view of ducts that will provide fresher air in the Retreat Center meditation hall.

New Executive Director for BCBS - In April, the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies ([BCBS](#)) welcomed their new Executive Director Laurie Phillips on board. Former ED Andrew Olendzki can now focus on teaching and writing as he assumes a full-time role as Senior Scholar.



Laurie Phillips (L) with Andrew Olendzki.

Dharma Updates

Online Teachings - IMS co-founding and guiding teacher Sharon Salzberg's recent [TEDx talk](#) titled "Transform Your Mind, Change the World" can now be viewed. And for an April online [Tricycle Talk](#), Sharon interviewed Tibetan meditation master Tsoknyi Rinpoche on awakening the power of 'essence love.'

In several short clips, [New York Insight](#) sangha members reflect on the value of

participating in a dharma center. They talk movingly about the role this plays in strengthening their sense of refuge, generosity and community.

Honoring Buddhist Women - Ayya Santacitta Bhikkhuni, who received full Bhikkhuni ordination last October, was honored earlier this year as an [Outstanding Woman in Buddhism](#). This award recognizes her contribution to the global empowerment of Theravada Buddhist women.



Ayya Santacitta Bhikkhuni (L) and Ayya Anandabodhi Bhikkhuni offer a meal chant while here to lead our annual Monastic Retreat in April.

New Titles - Two recently-published books describe how mindfulness and other meditation practices can impact our individual lives and society. [Watch](#) Charlie Rose interview one of the pioneer researchers in this field, Richard J. Davidson, Ph.D., about his new book, *The Emotional Life of Your Brain*, written with Sharon Begley.

In [A Mindful Nation](#), Congressman Tim Ryan shares powerful stories on the successful application of mindfulness in classrooms, hospitals, boardrooms, research labs and other diverse settings across America.



Program Highlights

At the Retreat Center, revered Burmese meditation master Sayadaw U Tejaniya's course, *Dhamma Everywhere*, ended May 11.



Sayadaw U Tejaniya offers the teachings with (L-R) Carol Wilson, Steve Armstrong and translator Moushumi Ghosh (Ma Thet).



Sayadaw with happy retreatants at the course closing.

At the Forest Refuge, Joseph Goldstein has returned to teaching after taking a sabbatical last year. In April, he taught with Sky Dawson, and throughout May is teaching with Kamala Masters.



Sky Dawson and Joseph Goldstein.



Kamala Masters in the Forest Refuge meditation hall.

Space Available - At the [Forest Refuge](#), Sayadaw U Vivekananda will offer the Dhamma throughout June - a few spaces have opened up during this month. Contact our office for more information: please [email](#) or call us at [978-355-2063](tel:978-355-2063). From August on, more openings are available for a personal retreat.

At the [Retreat Center](#), there are still openings in [Uncovering Innate Freedom](#), our Labor Day weekend course led by Pascal Auclair and Anushka Fernandopulle (August 31 - September 3).



Pascal Auclair



Anushka Fernandopulle

There are also some slots in [Part 2](#) of this year's Three-Month Retreat. This six-week course runs from October 20 - December 1 with teachers Joseph Goldstein, Rebecca Bradshaw, Annie Nugent, Pascal Auclair and Winnie Nazarko. Every participant in this course will have a single room.



Sangha Reflections

Below is a sampling of some of our retreatants' reflections.

"IMS is the first place where I've felt a true spiritual connection to my inner self. Thanks to IMS and its teachers, I can appreciate my life and be of help to those around me."

"This retreat made such an enduring shift in my life - I'd want everyone to have this opportunity."

"The powerful energy of sitting with sangha on retreat supports my practice beyond what I've been able to gain alone."

"I feel much gratitude for your work and service to the dharma. Like the passing of a breath or cloud I'll be driving away much lighter and clearer to face the world and life ahead."

"Thank you again for all that you did for all of us. I am back in my home and work a much better person because of the work you all do at IMS."



Serving at IMS

Are you interested in serving at IMS and enjoying the benefits of deepening wisdom and connecting with like-minded people? We have two staff positions currently open and a month-long volunteer opportunity.

Staff Positions - Our Communications and Development department is seeking a [Coordinator](#) with strong communication skills to help build awareness of IMS's offerings.

And our skilled and friendly Retreat Center Kitchen team is looking for a [Cook](#) to join them!



Volunteer Opportunities - A volunteer position has just opened up for a [Working Guest](#) in June. Our Facilities department is seeking someone to help maintain our beautiful grounds. You can download the application [here](#).

Please spread the word as we are eager for all these positions to be filled as soon as possible.



Wishing You Well

All of us at IMS wish you and your loved ones peace, good health and happiness in the coming months.



You can find an [archive of Sangha News](#) and links to its audio interviews on our website.

IMS is a spiritual refuge for all who seek freedom of mind and heart. We offer meditation retreats rooted in the Theravada Buddhist teachings of ethics, concentration and wisdom. These practices help develop awareness and compassion in ourselves, giving rise to greater peace and happiness in the world.

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