

Eugene Buddhist Priory
Temple of Boundless Compassion
85415 Teague Loop
Eugene, OR 97405-9536 USA
(541) 344-7377; news@eugenebuddhistpriory.org

August 28, 2010

Dear Friends,

I trust you are all well. Attached or enclosed are the calendars for September and October. The main thrust at the moment is painting the newly-remodeled front porch. We could use more help with this on workdays. We are also pushing ahead to conform to state regulations for defensible space for firefighting around the temple buildings, thus the many small grounds and maintenance projects you see going on. We have a late-September deadline in order to qualify for a rebate, and we want to invite the forester out again before I depart for Conclave on September 13 (see below).

On Saturday, September 4, the **workday** will begin at 11:00 and run until 5:00pm. Our **Dharma school** friends are invited to join us in the work for the morning; they will be watching a film after lunch. As usual, bring a sack lunch and food to share. Not exactly a "potluck", perhaps "half a pot". We'll show the same film on Sunday, September 5 for everyone else after meditation as usual at 9:30am.

I will be away at Shasta Abbey September 13 through October 1 for our Order's Rules Conclave. Every ten years the senior monks of the Order gather to review the rules and make any necessary revisions or additions. It's also a rare opportunity to pull everyone together as a lineage family and talk about mutual concerns and issues. With temples now in five countries, meeting face to face becomes more important, and there have been many developments in the last ten years that we need to assess and consider. John Kieres will be remaining here at the temple and keeping the daily schedule going, while lay ministers will keep the Wednesday and Sunday activities coordinated.

Note October Sunday and Wednesday activities on the September calendar. Our plan is for John to spend October and November training at Shasta Abbey as a lay resident. The daily schedule will depend on additional assistance. We will send an updated October calendar once I return from Conclave.

Lay Care Coordinator for September is Nancy Fletcher, 541-683-4137.

Carpooling or if you need a ride: meet at the parking lot on south side of South Hills Physical Therapy Clinic at 4175 East Amazon at 9:10am on Sundays. The LTD 25 bus stops there.

Orientations for newcomers during the remainder of the year are scheduled for: September 4, October 9, November 11 and December 10. A thank you to our lay ministers who coordinate these events.

Priory Visit: On June 8th, 15 residents of The Eugene Hotel retirement community visited the priory. Lay ministers Ernie Rimerman and Dixie Feiner gave a short talk on Buddhism and meditation as well as a tour of the priory. Rev. Master Oswin later joined us for tea and answered questions. The visitors were especially interested in meditation and an explanation of the attributes of the statues in the Meditation Hall.

Outside Teachings: On May 19th, Rev. Master Oswin was invited by neighbor and interfaith friend Professor Veena Howard to speak on Buddhism to her Religions and Nonviolence class at Lane Community College. On July 13th, Rev. Oriana spoke to Professor Howard's Asian Studies class at the University of Oregon. The class had been reading Dogen's *Shobogenzo-zuimonki* and Rev. Oriana spoke on Dogen's importance in the daily life of a contemporary Zen monastery.

Rev. Master Oswin and several Priory members participated in the Eugene Peace Village on June 30th in order to give Buddhist instruction to approximately seventy children. Peace Village is an interfaith day camp offered by the local Congregationalist church and provides an environment in which young people can learn ways of peacemaking and nonviolence. The students ranged from grades 1st through 8th. Each day included small group presentations on a different world religion. At an opening assembly Rev. Master led the group in singing "Dedication of Merit" and before lunch, reciting the "Five Thoughts." For the presentations, Rev. Master set up a Buddhist altar as he gave meditation instruction to each of the groups, using each altar item to illustrate an aspect of meditation. Then everyone participated in seated and walking meditation. The classes were very successful and the children had lots of interesting questions.

Ceremonies: On July 25th Rev. Master Oswin led a beautiful blessing ceremony of two garden statues erected near the orchard. The standing female Buddha and the Bodhisattva in the relaxed royal ease position were offered in memory of Gloria Peters and Jack Nulsen, mother and brother of Priory member Phyllis Commeree's partner Peggy Nulsen. After each statue's eyes were opened, each was invited to "live here in peace for this is the Place for You." It was particularly moving to have family and friends of the deceased participate and join the Sangha in reciting Scriptures. Later, the family spread ashes among the statues and bamboo plants purchased especially for the memorial gardens.

Then on August 4th Ernie and Jane Rimerman and friends brought Doolittle Cat for a

funeral and burial in the Priory orchard and animal cemetery. Doolittle had been failing for several weeks and had been given the Precepts several months ago. He joined other Priory members' deceased animal friends under the shade of two large ferns.

Monastic Guests: During Rev. Master Oswin's absence in July, Rev. Oriana LaChance, a senior monk and disciple of Rev. Master Daishin at Throssel Hole, filled in as prior. It was such a pleasure to have her with us and to listen to her interesting and inspiring Dharma talks. To escape the heat, members of the Sangha took her on an outing to Silver Creek Falls for a picnic. We were grateful for her presence and teaching. Over the summer we also enjoyed short visits from Rev. Masters Haryo, Seikai, and Mugo and Revs. Sheridan and Amanda.

A communication from Priory member Dave Faux, now living in New York City. He's married and with a child, Miwa, age 2:

I have thought of the Eugene Priory Sangha and your leadership there often over the last several months. I have been trying to build my practice towards scheduling a weekly visit to the New York Zendo affiliated with the Zen Studies Society [a Rinzai Zen organization]. Making time for this has been no easy task...

I have started meditating for 5 minutes before I put Miwa to sleep, whereas I used to sit only afterwards (when I was exhausted). She tries to hug me from behind and runs around a little bit. But, she also sits and just hangs out for, maybe, a half-minute here and there. When the 5 minutes is up, I call her over and she, without instruction, gets between me and the wall, kneeling and facing me. I say, "Do this," and put my hands in gassho, which she imitates. Then I say, "How great and wondrous are the clothes of enlightenment . . ." When I pay homage to the three treasures, my bows put my head closer to hers, and this makes her laugh. Sometimes I think the laughing is inappropriate; other times I think it is the "color of Mu." ["Mu" = "not" or "emptiness"] Either way, I am just happy to expose her to some spirituality so that, whether she drifts from religion or not, she will always have a reference point from which to start exploring these deep matters.

I am also particularly grateful for the Order in teaching me solid zazen. Like running, all you need is minimal gear, some space to accomplish the activity, and proper form. Whether in a new town, too busy, or not finding a decent "group" with whom to share the journey, neither running nor zazen require any fees or time commitment beyond the time it takes to do the thing itself. So I thank you and your colleagues at OBC for that, as well. Please send my best to the local Sangha.

In gratitude: Thank you to everyone who supports the Priory in all the myriad ways you do, as well as our Order, which is our lineage family. In addition to a multitude of food offerings, we recently have been offered cat care, prescriptions & supplements, books & DVDs for the library, window shades, gravel, household supplies, and a special gift from Eloise & Steve Larson of the Mt. Shasta congregation—a cast bronze bell for the meditation hall. A thank you also goes to all who have been helping with the workdays, especially Bev, Ernie and Doug.

May you all be well, happy, safe, and secure. May we all meet life and training challenges with equanimity, compassion, and kindness. In gassho,

Rev. Oswin