



SHAMBHALA HALIFAX BANNER

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Halifax Shambhala Centre • Volume XXVIII Issue 09 • Aug-Oct 2015

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PG 4

submission deadline for
next issue: Oct 1st

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

by Michelle Munro



I'm sitting here staring at the beautiful greenery outside my window wondering where to start... it's been a whirlwind of activity between home and work, and for these few moments I am (mostly) still.

Over the last 2 weeks, Acharya Rosenthal and myself have hosted 4 community conversations on behalf of the Strategic Planning Committee. It has been a precious opportunity. I am so grateful to those of you who have come out to share your concerns and ideas with us. It has felt very important to hear from people in this way. So much so, that to help me keep my ear to the ground, I aspire to hold regular community meetings of this nature in a similar format. I have not confirmed timing yet, but the

feedback has been so positive and the opportunity to communicate face to face so powerful, that I want to make this a regular practice during my Directorship.

Speaking of my time as Director, you may have heard my Interim post has been extended until Shambhala Day 2016!

After much careful consideration and consultation with the Strategic Planning Committee we have decided to go forward with the kitchen! In all it's glory. There will be some inconveniences to come, in terms of kitchen use but I assure you it will be well worth it!

I wish you all so much happiness and good health. I know many of you have been immersed in deepening your connection to Shambhala through various programs. May that be of great benefit to you, your loved ones, and our world.



Shambhala Castle by Maisy Munro

I want to leave you with a poem I wrote after staffing Enlightened Society Assembly at Karme Choling this past winter. Maybe you can relate...

Reflections Between

It began in a moment and ended in another. Somewhere between a tear and a heartbeat a spark ignited.

Who are you?
Where have you been?
Come closer and tell me your story.
Or better yet let us drop the story.
Yours. Mine. All of them.
Let's just experience the space between us as it grows smaller.
As if we share one precious beating heart longing to love all of humanity.

UPDATE FROM THE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Submitted by Genea Teskey on behalf of the Strategic Planning Committee

The Halifax Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) has been meeting since February. The members of the group are: Jeff Scott, Eve Rosenthal, Gordon Kidd, Jim Drescher, Landon Mallery, Martin Janowitz, Michelle Munro, Patricia Blaine, Sarah Furey, David Garrett, Genea Teskey, Jason Harvey, and Lara Scheibling.

Acharya Eve Rosenthal and Michelle Munro begun hosting community conversation on behalf of the Strategic Planning Committee this month. They explored the question where do you see Shambhala in Halifax in 2020, and how can the Centre support that vision?

Four public meetings have taken place and more will be announced in the coming weeks. There are a few themes which have come up in every meeting. These include accessibility issues, the need for a community space and multi use spaces and programming outside the curriculum.

The SPC is still looking for more input from everyone but especially from parents with young children, second and third generation Shambhalians, and those with accessibility issues including mobility, hearing loss or other issues which make accessing programming in the building a challenge.

DIRECTOR NEWS

by Carolyn Mandelker, Executive Director of Shambhala

As you know, Ms Michelle Munro was appointed to the post of interim Executive Director of the Halifax Shambhala Centre last April. She agreed to perform this role until the end of October 2015. We discussed that we would reassess where we are in the Strategic Planning Process over the summer and decide when to begin recruitment for a permanent director. As you know, the idea was to see if the emerging vision for the Halifax Centre would in some way guide our sense of the kind of director we would be looking for to take the strategic plan forward. We are now looking at whether it is time to recruit a permanent director or whether we still need more time to go a little further the strategic process before doing that.

The Strategic Process has gotten off to a slow start, but seems to be gathering and moving forward at this point with the community meetings that are taking place. I understand that the intention is to conclude the process by early fall and offer a proposal to the Kalapa Council and Sakyong at that point.

As recruitment generally takes 4-6 months from the time we begin until a new director is installed, it seems that we may be ready to appoint a permanent director somewhere around Shambhala Day 2016.

From the perspective of the Halifax Shambhala Centre staff, and many sangha members that I have spoken to, Michelle has done an excellent job so far. Her staff feel well supported and coordinated as a team. I have heard from many community members, and I feel myself that Michelle is intelligent, warm and skillful and delightful to work with.

Although she is an interim director, she is doing the job fully. As such, I have asked Michelle to stay on as interim director through Shambhala Day 2016. This will allow her to move forward on a number of issues within the centre, allow the Strategic Planning Process to complete its proposal to the Sakyong and Kalapa Council, leading up to the search and appointment of a permanent director for the Halifax Shambhala Centre on or around Shambhala Day 2016.

I see this as a very rich time of exploration for the Halifax Shambhala community, and wish to extend my thanks to Michelle for her kind and skillful leadership, and to all of you—the staff and Strategic Planning Group—for your inspiration, hard work and care in steering the Shambhala Centre into the future!

SUMMER ARTS PROGRAM

The Shambhala Centre was bustling with activity from July 20th-24th. The sounds of an improvisational percussion ensemble filled the building, and the rapid patter of feet was felt around the halls, as an energetic group of 8-10 year olds delighted in the Summer Arts Program.

This engaging camp offered a variety of opportunities for the participants to explore creativity, discipline, and space with instruction in Gagaku, Calligraphy, Origami, Etegami, and Bookmaking. The program was led by a dynamic trio consisting of Sarah Cox, Jamie Pratt and Miyako Ballesteros.

Pictures and video from this program are available at: <https://summerartsprogram2015.wordpress.com/>



WHY PRACTICE QIGONG?

by Sophie Leger

Qigong is a wonderful way to integrate a body discipline into our spiritual journey. Without a healthy body, working on the mind can be challenging. However, as Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche says: "With a body made joyous through movement, the mind is able to relax."

Practiced for over 2000 years, Qigong is more than exercise: it is a healing discipline for the body and mind, both gentle and profound, and accessible to everyone. Even people who have physical challenges can participate, as qigong's gentle movements and postures help to re-introduce mobility and relaxation.

The practice is easy and enjoyable. It does not require a major time commitment and can be done almost anywhere. Once you receive instruction during the program, you can practice at home, on your own. It is also very inexpensive, as no special equipment is required.

On the physical level, qigong increases muscle strength and flexibility, and is also a way to prevent disease and improve health. After a qigong session, people often describe how their body feels energized, warm, open and relaxed. Numerous studies in China have documented the positive effects of qigong on various cardio-vascular diseases, digestion, kidney functions, bone density, etc. Qigong is also well known to improve blood circulation and strengthen the immune system. Many people have commented on how problems related to fatigue and low-energy have been greatly alleviated.

Qigong also helps stabilize the mind. For centuries, in China, qigong has been used as a tool to build the foundation for sitting meditation. Meditation practitioners who have to sit still for long periods of time can really benefit from qigong. By undoing blockages and allowing a more fluid circulation of the internal energy (or qi), qigong increases our ability to fully inhabit our body and be present every moment.

If you are interested in trying it out, the Halifax Shambhala Centre will be offering a Level 1-2 on October 3-4. This weekend course is the foundation for a progressive program of qigong instruction, presented by Eva Wong and authorized instructors, exclusively through Shambhala Centers.

WEEKDAY MEDITATION

Mon. to Sat. 7-8:15am

(All are welcome to stay at 8am for the daily morning chants, 10-15min or so.)

Mon. to Fri.: 9-10am, 5-6 pm

(All are welcome to stay at 8am for the daily morning chants, 10-15min or so.)

We always welcome trained Guides, ADs and MIs, as well as meditators with a solid experience of meditation, to be umdze (timekeeper). If you are inspired to contribute to the community of meditators, please contact Robert Halpern for details: halpernrobert@hotmail.com or 902-405-2697.

Free of charge. Your generosity is what makes this possible.

SUNDAY MEDITATION

Sundays, 9am-noon

Sunday morning practice is a golden opportunity to practice meditation in a strong container with a range of newer and more experienced practitioners, and it is a great place to meet with your meditation instructor. Free of charge. Donations welcomed!

The second Sunday of every month includes Maitri bhavana, a meditation practice to benefit the seriously ill, that will take place every second Sunday—Names and illnesses of friends and relatives may be written on the sheet posted in the Main Shrine Room.

WAY OF SHAMBHALA

Open to people of any spiritual tradition, the Way of Shambhala is designed for the modern world and is suitable for both beginning and experienced meditators alike. It provides a strong foundation in mindfulness-awareness meditation, wisdom teachings, contemplative arts and physical disciplines rooted in the ancient traditions of Shambhala and Tibetan Buddhism.

The Way of Shambhala consists of a series of classes and weekend programs explores the Shambhala vision of basic goodness and enlightened society. The practice of meditation is presented as a means to cultivate fearlessness, confidence, openness, and gentleness toward ourselves, each other and our world.

The courses are interactive and communal, and create a learning environment where the teachings are intimate and relevant. Participants train in meditation, and use inquiry, dialogue and contemplative arts to integrate the teachings.

CONTENTMENT IN EVERYDAY LIFE

September 10th - October 8th



Contentment in Everyday Life is a 5-week course offering an experiential training in contentment, as well as an exploration of the obstacles or challenges to experiencing simplicity, gentleness and mindfulness in everyday life. The course responds with practical suggestions to the question "How can I bring the contentment of meditation into my everyday life?"

FEARLESSNESS IN EVERYDAY LIFE

September 17th - October 15th



In learning to work with our anxiety, we are not blocked by fear. Through an exploration of the Buddhist teachings of mind and the nature of reality, we learn to see clearly. We dare to face life and death as they are. The meditator, open to uncertainty, goes beyond the emotions of hope and fear to experience equanimity.

Prerequisite: Joy in Everyday Life

HOW CAN I HELP? THE BASIC GOODNESS OF SOCIETY

October 19th - November 23rd



This course in the Basic Goodness Series asks the question, "How can I help?" and explores our relationships with others, an aspiration to help our world, and specific aspects of social transformation. We look at a Shambhala understanding of society, and what enlightened society may be. Is society something that is ultimately confused, or is there goodness in human society?

Prerequisites: Meditation in Everyday Life, or Contentment in Everyday Life, or Shambhala Training Level I Weekend Retreat.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

Sept 1-29 - Class on the Chants with Walker Blaine

Sept 8 - Buddhism and Science with Gordon Shotwell

Sept 19 - Harvest of Peace

Sept 25-27 - Regional Shambhala Ritual Academy with Acharya Suzann Duquette, Andrea Doukas & Walker Blaine

Oct 3-4 - Traditional Daoist Qigong Levels I & II with Sophie Léger

Oct 9-12 - Changling Rinpoche (Vajrayana Program)

Oct 23-Nov 7 - Refuge Vow & Classes with Acharya Eve Rosenthal

Oct 23-Nov 7 - Bodhisattva Vow & Classes with Acharya Eve Rosenthal

Oct 25 - Exploring the Feminine and Masculine: A Retreat for the LGBT Community with Acharya Eve Rosenthal

Oct 31- Nov 1 - Shambhala Art Part 1: Coming To Your Senses with Stéphane Bédard

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GARDENING GOODNESS

Submitted by David Wimberly & Petra Mudie

Miracles do happen! Since the last snow melted in early May, our gardens have transformed from soggy bare earth to lush green fields of veggies and fruit. Thanks to the generous efforts of gardeners Elizabeth Berlasso and Regan, transplants of various lettuces, kale, mustards and other goodies were planted on May 6 - and they have flourished enough to allow us to fill huge bowls of salad in both June and July. We particularly enjoyed making a Rainbow Salad for Pride Week, using our garden fruits and flower petals sprinkled over the salad greens and fresh herbs. Thanks also to a generous donation of giant planter pots from Emily Sell, we now have a row of healthy tomatoes, squash and beans blossoming at HSC. We expect there will be a good crop of these veggies awaiting harvest for the next Taste of Shambhala, along with a feast of new potatoes. Final thanks go to Judith Smith for donating a stone lantern that now invites visitors to the back door stairs,

to Annette Petrie for giving us hostas and some other garden flowers, and to Kevin Orrell and Peter Clancy for help with maintenance of the HSC garden. We welcome anyone who would like to help further with watering and weeding - in return for which, we offer raspberries, salad greens and herbs (chives, parsley, basil, oregano and mints).

We are delighted to announce the launch of the Facebook Page for the Gardening Goodness Page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/GardeningGoodnessProject>

Please visit our page and "like" us! Make it yours? Tell us what you would like to see done. What would draw your interest in participating? Do you have gardening skills or materials to offer? What is your vision of Shambhala gardening? Please do post there!



NERD CORNER: DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING BETTER TO DO?

by Robert Alan Paul



I have tried a few different tag lines for my emails over the years. For a while I had "If not you, who? If not now, when?" That was commonly attributed to Hillel, a Hebrew 'sage and scholar' from about 100 BCE (however, I could never find the actual citation from his works). I had heard those questions from my father when I was very young, and they have occasionally guided my choices on my various journeys. They seem to strike to a core of transforming hesitation into confidence, at least for me.

On a similar note, I more recently came up with my current tag line "Do you have anything better to do?" At some point, my son mentioned that he thought some folks might consider it aggressive. My son frequently acts as a ground-check for me. He knows (!?) that I am not being aggressive, but imagines what others might think

about things I do or say. He is never hesitant in telling me just how he thinks. It is great to have that kind of feedback (although sometimes not so great. LOL). However, since I sometimes think he judges too harshly, and some Sangha had mentioned they liked the tagline, I kept it. Just the other day, however, a close friend mentioned that he also thought it aggressive. Yet, by 'aggressive', he seemed to mean that he had a negative, defensive reaction to it—that I was questioning what he was doing when he read it. Of course, I could not know what he was doing when he read it.

Clearly, my question is a challenge. I designed it to provoke. If you have nothing better to do, fine. If you have something better to do, then why aren't you doing it? Why are you wasting your time reading silly emails—like mine—or whatever else you are doing? I certainly don't mean it in an aggressive way, but there is a fine line between a gentle challenge and an aggressive provocation, and I have been known to straddle it, or even leap to the other side. I am generally careful about how I compose with the written word, like this article or emails, realizing that emotional content is hard to convey in such media. In another context, that

same friend pointed out to me that I fell on the wrong side of that line in a recent email to someone else, in conveying what I thought was a gentle nudge, yet which was taken as an insulting affront. We don't always know an other's emotional state of mind or back story.

In the aforementioned context, that same friend pointed out to me that it is frequently better to err on the side of being kind, gentle, considerate and caring instead of provocative and challenging. When in personal conversation with a friend who we know well, and when we can add a smile or pat on the shoulder, and dialogue can ensue, then provocation and challenge without either aggression or significantly negative judgment can be quite helpful and even well appreciated.

It is all a matter of how skillful we are with people. Erring on the side of kindness cannot be wrong, and it seems always better to be kind. The Sakyong has repeatedly told us to be kind. Kindness—he told us—is an innate characteristic that simply needs to shine through our habitual crap. His kindness to us can radiate throughout our world with our kindness to others.

Do you have anything better to do?



DEATH MATTERS

by Deborah Luscomb

“Death is a vast mystery, but there are two things we can say about it: It is absolutely certain that we will die, and it is uncertain when or how we will die. The only surety we have, then, is this uncertainty about the hour of our death, which we seize on as the excuse to postpone facing death directly. We are like children who cover their eyes in a game of hide and seek and think that no one can see them.” -Tsogyal Rinpoche

The Death Café is taking a summer holiday in August and will resume meeting the first Tuesday of each month at 3:30 at the Trident Café on Hollis Street in Halifax. The next gathering is September 1st.

The Death Projects is a series of explorations into the subject of death. Each exploration will be its own “project”. From people on the edge of death to authors who have grappled with mortality to the latest research into making us immortal, this blog will be an attempt to understand the different ways people grapple with this subject. To read more go to...

<http://deathprojects.com/6-reasons-you-should-think-more-about-death/>

Death Matters, three guided meetings, will begin on Saturday, September 19th, and continue October 3rd and 17th, 2-4 pm. The meetings will cover....

- Personal Directives: what kind of measures do you want taken to keep you alive (or not)
- Health Care Agents: who will speak for you if and when you are unable
- Funeral Planning: care of your body, funeral ceremony, disposal of corpse, and more

You will have the opportunity to explore, document, and share with your loved ones your end-of-life wishes. It is never too soon to contemplate and prepare for death.

Space is limited. Location to be announced. For more information and to register, please contact Deborah Luscomb, dfuscomb@gmail.com, 902.403.7590.



Summer Art Ikebana

DARTMOUTH SHAMBHALA MEDITATION GROUP

North Woodside Community Centre
230 Pleasant Street, Dartmouth

info@dartmouth-shambhala.ca
www.dartmouth.shambhala.org

Join us on the 3rd Sunday of every month for A Taste of Meditation Half-Nyinthun and Community Potluck.

9am- 10:45am – sitting for experienced practitioners
10:45am -11am – Tea. 11am-12pm – Meditation
Instruction available for new practitioners. 12pm-1pm
– Community Potluck – contributions welcome but not
necessary, families welcome!

Tuesday evening Open House and Meditation
Every Tuesday, 7-9pm. Everyone is welcome! Sitting
meditation 7 - 7:50 pm - Tea Discussion/ Talk/Program
8 - 9pm Meditation instruction available.

Suggested donation \$7 per evening. Cost should not
be a factor in any program, please pay what you can
if this is a concern.

Tuesdays 7-9:15 pm, we welcome anyone interested
in learning how to meditate or already have a regular
practice to join us for meditation, tea social, followed
by a talk or discussion on topics of Shambhala
Buddhism and applications of meditation in daily life.
<http://dartmouth.shambhala.org>.

Continuing throughout the year we offer diverse
programs and special practice and study events offered
by visiting teachers. See our calendar page for what is
happening:

<http://dartmouth.shambhala.org/monthly-calendar/>



“Waterfall” from Summer Art Program

ST. MARGARETS BAY SHAMBHALA CENTRE

13495 Peggy’s Cove Road, Upper Tantallon
bay.shambhala.org • smbssc@chebucto.ns.ca

*Ongoing/open to all:
Meditation Plus!*

Wednesdays 7pm – 9pm.
Meditation practice plus tea, a short talk and
Discussion. Meditation Instruction at 7pm.

Supper at Shambhala

1st Wed of each month
(serving from 5:45 – 6:45 pm)
Soup plus pot luck and donations.
Bring family, friends and neighbours.

Community Meditation Practice
Sundays 9:30am – noon

Contact Bruce at 876-8880 or
bruce.wauchope@nspower.ca



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Pam Johnson

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Chris Morel
 Rickey Pannel

KALAPA IKEBANA GROUP

Contact:
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 Liza Matthews

OPEN VOLUNTEER POSITIONS:

- Families & Youth Coordinator
- Outreach Coordinator
- Volunteer Mentor
- Audio/Recording Coordinator
- Culture & Decorum
- Hospitality

If you are interested in any of these positions, please contact Michelle Munro at hscdirector15@gmail.com

HALIFAX SHASTRIS

Mary Campbell

ATLANTIC REGIONAL SHASTRIS

Alice Haspray, Christine Sloan, Veit Weber

Generosity Policy

The Halifax Shambhala Centre is a non-profit organization supported by program fees, donations and the energy of many volunteers. While our programs have suggested fees needed to support the Centre, if

that is an obstacle, you may pay as much as you are able to pay.

There are many opportunities for volunteers to help make our activities, programs and resources available to the community. See <http://halifax.shambhala.org/get-involved/volunteering-how-to-help/>

on the Halifax Shambhala Centre homepage.

No-Scent Policy

The Halifax Shambhala Centre is scent-free. Please refrain from wearing scented products.