



Mid America Dharma News

Summer Issue

Mid America Dharma Group
<http://www.midamericadharm.org/>

July, 1999

All It Takes Is Us

In the year 2000 Mid America Dharma will have one of the richest offerings of its 15 year history. We will begin the year with a very special event, a New Year's Retreat with Venerable Santikaro Bhikkhu. In March we will offer our second Old Yogi Retreat taught by Matthew Flickstein. We are also very excited about welcoming Joseph Goldstein back to our schedule in May of 2000.

These retreats don't happen by accident. They come about for three reasons. First because a small group of people believe in the practice so deeply that they are willing to do the necessary preparatory work of arranging and scheduling. Second because Dharma teachers support us through the practice of teaching in our area for *dana*. And third and most important of all, because there are people whose lives are touched in a positive way by the efforts that are being made. It is because of the support of people like you and me, people who sign up for the retreats and thereby lend their support, that these retreats are continuing to flourish.

Years ago my husband saw me writing a check to Insight Meditation Society in Barre, Massachusetts and he asked what it was for. "I am offering my support to them for keeping practice opportunities available in our country," I answered. "That's true that they need to be supported," my husband answered. "But it is also true that we need places right here where *we* live in which to practice." he quietly continued.

Those quiet and simple words have been the reason behind my dedication to Mid America Dharma and to its dream of a Midwest Practice Center. I suddenly realized that Dharma is where we live and not simply relegated to far away places. I still support other Dharma Centers. But I opened my mind to a new exciting possibility that one day, we can do this too.

Large dreams come into reality bit by bit. Dreams of this nature take patience. They demand a dedication to the vision that we hold in common. And they require a deep and abiding sense of the *rightness* of the potential outcome. As we come together as organizers, teachers, and students, we are bringing together the ingredients to a vision. Slowly but surely, and with kindness and simplicity, this vision of our own place in which to practice, right here in the Heartland where we live, will take shape and come into being. All it takes is us.

~ Ginny Morgan



1999-2000 Retreat Schedule

- Sept 17-20 or 17-26:* Residential with Stephen Armstrong & Kamala Masters, Conception, MO
- Nov 11-14:* Residential with Wes Nisker
Atchison, KS
- 2000**
- Dec 30-Jan 2:* New Years Residential with Santikaro Bhikku
Conception, MO
- Jan 28-30:* Non-residential with Rodney Smith
Kansas City, MO
- Feb 11-20:* Teacher Training with Matthew Flickstein
Co-Sponsored with The Forest Way Insight
Meditation Ctr. Bay St. Louis, Mississippi
- Mar 3-12:* Old Yogi Residential with Matthew Flickstein
Excelsior Springs, MO
- Mar 31-Apr 2:* Non-Residential with Gil Fronsda
St. Louis, MO
- May 26-Jun 4:* Residential with Eugene Cash, Joseph Goldstein
and Myoshin Kelley. Conception, MO
- Aug 11-13:* Residential with Bhante Gunaratana
Conception, MO
- Sept 21-24:* Residential with Wes Nisker & Ginny Morgan
Location to be arranged.
- Nov 9-13:* Residential with Mary Orr
Conception, MO

*Registration for 2000 retreats will not begin until announced
in future issues of the newsletter.*

Joseph Goldstein Joins Eugene Cash and Myoshin Kelley in May of 2000

In an unexpected and lucky turn of events Joseph Goldstein will join the teacher roster in the May 2000 retreat at Conception Abbey. The retreat, which had originally been scheduled to run from May 25th to May 29th, has been expanded to a ten day retreat. Dates are now set and confirmed to run from Friday May 26th to June 4th. The Abbey has graciously offered to open rooms in the seminary so that every participant who wishes one will have a private room. Because we want to open this retreat to as many people as possible, we are negotiating to possibly add a fourth teacher. Official registration for this retreat will not open until March of 2000 but inquiries can be directed to Mid America Dharma's Retreat Coordinator, Ginny Morgan at 573-817-9942 or *e-mail*: ginny@midamericadharm.org.

Second Dharma Teacher Training Offered

In a joint effort, Mid America Dharma and The Forest Way Insight Meditation Center will be hosting a second teacher training for aspiring Dharma Teachers. It will be held from February 11th through the 20th in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi. Yes that's right, Mississippi. We chose this site because of more settled February weather, but we know that no one will complain about being in a retreat center that is only four blocks from the Gulf of Mexico.

The purpose of this course is to support qualified individuals in learning how to formally share the Dharma with others. It is important that those who are ready to share the Dharma begin the process of creating community by taking that first step to share what they know with others. This course is designed to help in that process. In this way Mid America Dharma hopes to assist in creating community-based practice in more areas of the country.

Instructing students in meditation requires a thorough understanding of the Buddha's central teachings. During the training, the Four Noble Truths, the Satipatthana Sutta, and the Seven Stages of Purification will be explored from a practice perspective. Time will also be spent writing and giving a Dharma talk, exploring the student-teacher relationship, and learning to recognize each student's level of development. This is not a certification program but rather a course designed to build skills requisite to teaching Dharma. Not everyone who applies will be accepted.

For applications and brochures contact Ginny Morgan, Mid America Dharma, 717 Hilltop Drive, Columbia, Missouri, 65201, 573-817-9942, e-mail<ginny@midamericadharm.org>. Cost of room and board is \$480. Instruction is offered on a dana basis.

Are You on Our Mailing List?

If you would like to receive future issues of *Mid America Dharma News* and you are not already on our mailing list, please drop a note to Marnie Hammer, c/o Mid America Dharma, P.O. Box 414411, Kansas City, MO 64141-4411.

You can make a financial donation* to Mid America Dharma to help support our operations; the Development Fund; our Scholarship Fund or, you could also donate your time and skills. Send your contributions and requests for information about service opportunities to: Mid America Dharma, 200 E. Parkway, Columbia, MO 65203.

I would like to contribute:*	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$10	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$25	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$50
	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$75	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	to Mid America Dharma Group.	
<input type="checkbox"/> I would like to volunteer my services, please let me know how I can help.						
Name	_____					
Address	_____					
City	_____					
State	_____					
Zip	_____		Home Phone	_____		
*Mid America Dharma Group is a tax-deductible 501(c)3 organization.						

St. Louis Waking Up

When I moved to St. Louis several years ago, I felt isolated. I had no Insight Meditation (IM) community in which to support and deepen my practice. I had come from Spirit Rock Center, a large Insight Meditation community in California. I knew the benefits of having a teacher, peers, and a regular schedule of talks, classes, group practice and retreats in a location dedicated to the Dharma. Each of these elements is an invaluable support necessary for the deepening of Dharma.

I have been in St. Louis for 4 years now and an Insight Meditation community is gradually coalescing. We hosted our first guest-teacher led retreat in January of '98 in which 70 people attended. We have now hosted 3 guest-teacher led retreats, the last one being a 3 day residential. We also have a teacher-led, day-long practice session every week along with biannual 4-week introductory courses and guest speakers.

I have also been teaching at Monsanto Co. which is headquartered in St. Louis. Monsanto's mindfulness program provides a variety of classes and retreats to their employee's. Susan Stone, another local Dharma leader, has been requested by 50 inmates at the Potosi Correctional Center in Missouri to start an Insight Meditation group. The details are currently being worked out.

Mid America Dharma Group has been an invaluable asset in collaborating with local Dharma leaders to aid in hosting nationally and internationally known teachers for our guest-teacher led retreats.

We are still in our infancy as a community here but as practitioners of Insight Meditation experience the rewards generated by what a local Sangha can offer, the natural response will be a desire to share their gratitude with others thereby supporting the Dharma Community in which they live and practice daily.

When Ananda asked the Buddha if spiritual friends were a large part of dharma practice, the Buddha replied that spiritual friends were all of dharma practice.

If anyone is interested in submitting an article to the Mid America Dharma Group Newsletter with information regarding Insight Meditation in your community, please send it to:

Elizabeth Fryer at Mid America Dharma Group
1509 Fawn Valley Drive
St. Louis, MO 63131
e-mail: modharma@aol.com

Sangha News

St. Louis Insight Meditation (Webster Sangha)-Will be relocating beginning in July. Please call Susan Stone (314)434-0747 or <http://hometown.aol.com/modharma/myhomepage/index.html> for our new schedule and location. We offer weekly dharma talks, instruction and day-long meditation retreats.

If you have news about your local sangha, please let the editor know. Send your news to: Editor, Mid America Dharma News, P.O. Box 414411, Kansas City, MO 64141-4411.

Mid America Dharma Fall 1999 Retreat Schedule

(This is the only information you will receive on these retreats. Please retain for future reference.)

Sept. 17-20 or 17-26: Residential Retreat with Stephen Armstrong & Kamala Masters, Conception Abbey, Conception, Missouri

This retreat is open to both beginning and experienced practitioners. The retreat will provide basic instruction in vipassana (insight) meditation in the Satipatthana tradition of Mahasi Sayadaw, emphasizing continuity of mindfulness and refinement of precise open awareness. This practice, from the Buddhist tradition, is conducive to deep, liberating insight. All rooms for this retreat will be singles. *Registration closes and final payment is due on Sept. 7. Any registrations postmarked after Aug. 30 will be subject to a \$25 late charge.*
REGISTRAR: Tonda March, Phone: (573) 443-0214



Steve has studied the Dhamma and practiced insight meditation since 1975. As a layman he was active for many years at the Insight Meditation Society in Barre, Massachusetts as manager and board member. As a monk for 5 years in Burma under the guidance of Sayadaw U Pandita at the Mahasi Meditation Center in Rangoon, he undertook intensive, silent practice of insight and

lovingkindness meditations. He studied the Buddhist psychology (Abhidhamma) with Sayadaw U Zagara in Australia and presents it in practical and easily understood terms. Steve makes his home on Maui and has been leading meditation retreats since 1990 including the annual three month retreat at the Insight Meditation Society



Kamala is an Asian-American woman living on Maui where she has raised four children. She is active in her community and leads a local sitting group weekly. Her Dhamma practice began with Munindra more than 20 years ago. In recent years she has continued to do intensive retreats with Sayadaw U Pandita. Kamala's most intensive practice has been within her home and community and

with that experience she offers effective and insightful guidance for householders' as parent, spouse and community member. Kamala has practiced both insight and lovingkindness meditations intensively under the guidance of Sayadaw U Pandita. She has recently been assisting and leading retreats including the annual three month retreat at IMS.

Nov. 11-14: Residential Retreat with Wes Nisker, Mount Conference Center, Atchison, Kansas

This retreat will provide basic instruction in vipassana (insight) meditation. The retreat is open to both beginning and experienced practitioners. *Registration closes and final payment is due on Oct. 29. Any registrations postmarked after Oct. 22 will be subject to a \$25 late charge.* REGISTRAR: Adam Asare, Phone: (573) 499-0024.



Wes 'Scoop' Nisker has practiced vipassana meditation for 25 years with various masters in Asia and the West. He has also studied Zen, Advaita and Dzogchen practices. Founder and co-editor of the vipassana journal *Inquiring Mind*, Wes is author of the books *Buddha's Nature: Evolution as a Practical Guide to Enlightenment*, *Crazy Wisdom* and *If You Don't Like The News, Go Out And Make Some Yourself*. He has a weekly sitting group in Berkeley, and leads classes in Buddhist meditation and philosophy at UC Berkeley, Esalen Institute, and other venues around the country.

REGISTRATION FORM

If you will be registering for more than one retreat, please photocopy this form. Each retreat has a different Registrar. Please do not attempt to register for more than one retreat on each copy of this form. If you do, your registration will be delayed.

Sept. 17-20 Residential Retreat with Steve Armstrong & Kamala Masters, Cost: \$235. Cost after Aug. 30: \$260. To register, return this form with check payable to: Mid America Dharma Group, 103 Bicknell, Columbia, MO 65203.

Sept. 17-26 Residential Retreat with Steve Armstrong & Kamala Masters, Cost: \$445. Cost after Aug. 30: \$470. To register, return this form with check payable to: Mid America Dharma Group, 103 Bicknell, Columbia, MO 65203.

Nov. 11-14 Residential Retreat with Wes Nisker, Cost: \$236, double; \$279, single; Deposit: \$70. Cost after Oct. 22: \$261, double; \$304, single. To register, return this form with check payable to: Mid America Dharma Group, 1609 Windsor St., Apt. 6, Columbia, MO 65201.

Please Print:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Gender: F M Do you snore? Y N

Will you arrive after 8 p.m. on the first day? Y N

Is this your first insight meditation retreat? Y N

If you have special needs, please contact the registrar.

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Information on Mid America Dharma Group Retreats

INSIGHT MEDITATION offers an easily accessible way of freeing the mind from the distortions of self-centeredness, negativity and confusion. Through concentrated awareness, we can learn to see our experience as a constantly changing process, in which pleasure and pain, fear and joy, and all aspects of life are accepted with increasing balance and equanimity. This insight leads to an understanding of our true nature and the possibility of living each moment fully with compassion and genuine freedom. Insight Meditation requires no belief commitments and is compatible with religious affiliations. Unless specified by the retreat description, no previous meditation experience is required.

RETREAT FORMAT: Periods of sitting meditation will be alternated with walking meditation. *Retreats will be held in silence with talking only during teaching periods. Beginners must be present from the start of the retreat to receive initial instructions.*

Please bring a meditation cushion or bench and a soft floor pad for meditation. Standard chairs are available and may also be used.

Wear comfortable, loose fitting clothes. Please do not wear or bring strongly scented lotions, perfumes or incense.

Residential Retreats begin with check-in at 4 p.m. on the first day and run through lunch on the last day. Participants will be guided through group or private interviews and daily general lectures.

Meals are plain vegetarian. A complimentary tea table will be available. Please be responsible for any special dietary needs.

REGISTRATION: Information about retreat site, starting times and other details will be sent after you register.

Residential Retreats: A deposit of \$70 must accompany your registration. Full payment is due before the start of the retreat.

Registration Deadline: Registration for Sept. retreat closes and final payment is due on Sept. 7. *Any registrations postmarked after Aug. 30 will be subject to a \$25 late charge.*

Registration for the Nov. retreat closes and final payment is due on Oct. 30. *Any registrations postmarked after Oct. 22 will be subject to a \$25 late charge.*

Retreat Costs: See the registration form on the previous page.

Refunds: No deposits will be refunded after the deadline. Please register as early as possible.

Scholarships: Inability to pay should not prevent you from attending, as there are scholarship funds set aside for this purpose. Deferred payment plans are also available. Contact the Registrar for a copy of the scholarship and deferred payment criteria. Written applications for scholarship must be received by the Registrar no later than three weeks prior to the retreat.

RETREAT REGISTRARS: Call with questions.

Sept. Retreat - Tonda March (573) 443-0214

Nov. Retreat - Adam Asare (573) 499-0024

Dana (or generosity): These retreats are led by teachers who freely give the teachings without any payment. All retreat fees go for retreat expenses. It is central to this tradition that the students support the teacher with a donation. There is no expected amount, but you are encouraged to give to the extent you are able. Dana is totally voluntary.

Mid America Dharma Group
P.O. Box 414411
Kansas City, MO 64141-4411

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