

Albuquerque Vipassana Sangha

Minutes of Membership Meeting -- 26 October 2000

Summary

- New officers
- Report on all-day retreat
- New committees
 - Sangha-building
 - Scheduling
 - Visioning
 - Child-friendly sangha
 - Retreat
- Report on teacher search
 - Fund-raising committee

The meeting began about 7:00 p.m. at Adelante Development Center following a short meditation sitting. Approximately 24 members of the sangha were present, including all seven board members. The meeting was co-facilitated by board members Paula Stern and Suzanne Kryder.

New officers

Mel Schneider announced the new officers for the sangha board, which were chosen at the board meeting on September 24. The officers are as follows:

Mel Schneider	President
Mary Roy	Vice-president
Stan (Sandy) Lee	Secretary
Wynette Richards	Treasurer

Report on all-day retreat

Mel then gave a short report on an all-day retreat that was held on October 15 at Joan Granger's house. The retreat was led by Michael Freeman, the leader of Southwest Sangha, a lay monastery near Silver City, NM. Approximately 12 members of the sangha attended the retreat, which was organized around the theme of "building sangha." In addition to the usual sitting and walking meditation periods, Michael led several exercises that produced a valuable discussion of what the participants did and did not like about our sangha, and what issues are important in helping the sangha to grow and develop.

New committees

Several sangha members discussed the need for (or current status of) several new and existing committees. For each proposed committee, a contact person was identified, so that people interested in working on that committee can talk with the contact person.

Sangha-building

Mel indicated a desire to follow up on the discussions held during Michael's all-day retreat by forming a "sangha-building" committee.

Scheduling

Suzanne Kryder gave a brief description of the duties of the current scheduling committee, which was formed last spring to schedule Thursday night activities. The three current members of the committee -- Suzanne, Hilary Heyl and Maggie Seeley -- have been serving since May, and plan to step down in December. Wynette has offered to serve on the committee, so two additional members are needed to help schedule Thursdays for the next few months.

Visioning

Suzanne also brought up the idea of a "visioning" committee to work on developing a long-range vision for the sangha, perhaps including a set of guiding principles that could expand on the sangha's purpose statement as set forth in the bylaws. After some discussion, it was pointed out that there might be some overlap between a visioning committee and the sangha-building committee proposed by Mel. One possibility would be to think of the visioning committee's function as defining a one-time, single-purpose event, such as a day-long gathering on a Saturday or Sunday sometime early next year, as opposed to the sangha-building committee, which might look at a range of topics and be an ongoing group.

Child-friendly sangha

Wynette expressed a desire to consider ways of making the sangha more "child friendly," for example, by providing day-care for children during sangha meetings and including children in some sangha activities. She said that doing so might enable the sangha to diversify its membership by increasing the number of members in their 20s and 30s. Mel commented that there is a small sangha in Albuquerque, called the Rainbow Sangha, that follows the teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh and includes children in its activities.

Retreat

Bonnie Kelly gave a brief report on the recent sandwich retreat sponsored by the sangha. Financially, the retreat yielded a surplus of slightly more than \$1000, as income from attendance fees was about \$3690 and expenses, at about \$2640, were less than anticipated. There was some discussion of whether the surplus should be reserved for future retreats, but no formal decision was made.

Bonnie then discussed the need to establish a permanent retreat committee that could handle issues such as scheduling retreats and making reservations well in advance. (She has been looking into making reservations for next year's sandwich retreat with Eric Kolvig, to be held in

December 2001, and is finding that some facilities are already booked up.) She presented a proposal to establish such a committee, as follows:

Purpose: To create a retreat committee that will

1. Plan retreats to be approved and sponsored by AVS
2. Schedule retreats
3. Provide assistance with coordination and management of individual retreats, if necessary

Size: 5 to 6 members

Selection Procedure:

1. By vote of membership
2. By vote of retreat committee volunteers
3. Other possibilities?

After a short discussion, there was a consensus to adopt the proposal. The issue of how to select the members of the committee was left open, as several people felt it unlikely that more than five or six people would be competing to serve on the committee. Two additional suggestions were made concerning the committee's activities: (a) the committee should identify and publicize retreats being given by other Buddhist organizations in the area, and (b) the committee should contact the Santa Fe sangha and try to benefit from their considerable experience in planning and organizing retreats.

Bonnie also mentioned two retreats that the sangha is currently planning: a New Year's Eve and New Year's Day retreat to be held at the end of this year at Joan Granger's house, led by Eric, and the December 2001 sandwich retreat with Eric to be held in the Jemez Mountains at the Servants of the Paraclete retreat center. That retreat is expected to accommodate around 20 to 30 participants.

Report on teacher search

Tam Saimons gave a report on the meetings and discussions that have been held with the Santa Fe sangha over the past several months regarding the search for a new resident teacher. At a recent meeting of the Santa Fe sangha, they accepted the three-point proposal that we made at their search-committee meeting in September, which provides that:

- The Albuquerque sangha will provide approximately 1/6 of the annual costs of the resident teacher (stipend and allowance for health insurance), and also provide a comparable fraction of the costs of bringing the remaining teacher candidates to Santa Fe. (This figure was based on Eric's estimate of what fraction of his time was spent on Albuquerque vs. Santa Fe.)

- Our sangha will participate in the consensus decision-making process, to occur next spring, that will decide which candidate will be offered the position.
- The new resident teacher will give two dharma talks per month in Albuquerque, along with granting interviews before the dharma talks, and also lead at least four one-day sittings per year.

It was then announced that we had recently been informed by Santa Fe that they would be having a discussion on Tuesday, October 31 about people's impressions of Shaila Tromovitch, followed by a discussion on Sunday, November 12 at the monthly sangha meeting about what procedures should be used in discussing the various candidates following their trips to Santa Fe. Suzanne indicated that, based on her conversation with a member of the Santa Fe sangha, they had scheduled the discussion about Shaila without realizing that they had requested that our sangha not organize any meetings specifically to discuss the candidates amongst ourselves.

There was then a discussion of what, if anything, our sangha should do in response to the Santa Fe meeting on October 31, eventually leading to a proposal that we formally request that the meeting be recorded so that we could at least be aware of, if not participate in, the discussion. After more discussion, a consensus was finally reached that since the October 31 meeting was only a few days away, we should let the matter drop and plan on clarifying the issue at the November 12 meeting in Santa Fe. (Many thanks to Suzanne Kryder for her skilful facilitation of the discussion.) Vicki Gottlieb said that since she works in Santa Fe, she would attend the meeting on the 31st as an observer.

Fund-raising committee

Given our sangha's commitment to help financially support the interviewing and hiring of the new teacher, it is clear that we will need to start some organized fund-raising activities. Vicki Gottlieb offered to be the contact person for setting up a new fund-raising committee, whose first responsibility will be to generate possible approaches.

The meeting adjourned at about 8:25 p.m.

* * * * * Stanley Lee, secretary * * * * *

Summary of committee contact people:

Committee	Contact Person	Contact Phone
Visioning	Suzanne	771-8498

Sangha Building	Mel	345-9165
Scheduling Thursday Nights	Suzanne	771-8498
Child-Friendly Sangha	Wynette	255-5226
Retreat Planning and Scheduling	Bonnie	255-5358
Fund Raising	Vicki	294-7338