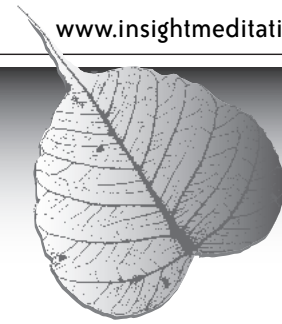


Insight



APRIL, MAY, JUNE 2009

VOLUME 12, NUMBER 2

Mental Noting

Thinking can be a powerful force of distraction, preventing us from being mindfully present in a useful way. During meditation, a simple method in which we use thinking to stay present rather than carrying us away is ‘mental noting’. This is the practice of using a simple “note” to calmly name – as a whisper in the mind – what we are experiencing. Though it can take a while to learn, and can be awkward at first, with practice, mental noting can become second nature.

Noting directs thinking into a simple, rudimentary form, rather than letting it wander off into distraction. “An idle mind will get in trouble” is a saying that describes how an insufficiently attentive mind can all too easily drift off into thought. Mental noting gives the thinking mind something to do which supports meditation rather than distracts from it. It can be a useful way to interrupt the incessant flow of discursive thoughts.

In contrast to most thinking, noting is not discursive. It does not involve analysis or judgment. Rather, we simply give our current experience a one-word label. For example, upon hearing a sound we note ‘hearing’ without thinking further about the sound. Other common mental notes are ‘seeing’, ‘touching’, ‘feeling’, and ‘thinking’.

Some experiences may be given more descriptive labels. For example, sensations may be noted as ‘warmth’, ‘coolness’, ‘pressure’, ‘tightness’, and so on. Emotions may be named: ‘happiness’, ‘sadness’, ‘excitement’, ‘fear’. Mental activity may be recognized as ‘wanting’, ‘planning’, ‘resisting’, and the like. With mindfulness of breathing a common note is ‘rising’ as the belly or chest lifts on the inhalation, and ‘falling’ as we exhale.

Usually, a specific note is repeated until the experience being noted disappears, is sufficiently acknowledged, or is no longer predominant.

Noting in meditation has many functions. The primary one is keeping the meditator present – sometimes it is called an ‘anchor’ to the present. The mind is less likely to wander off if one keeps up a steady stream of relaxed noting. If the mind does wander, the noting practice can make it easier to reestablish mindfulness.

Another function of noting is to better acknowledge or recognize what is occurring: the clearer one’s recognition, the more effective one’s mindfulness. Naming can strengthen recognition.

Sometimes this can be a kind of truth-telling, when we are reluctant to admit something about ourselves or about what is happening.

A third function of noting is to help recognize patterns in one’s experience. A frequently-repeated note reveals a frequently-recurring experience. For example, persistent worriers may not realize it until they see how often they note ‘worry’.

And fourth, as described above, mental noting gives the thinking mind something to do rather than leaving it to its own devices.

A fifth function is disentangling us from being preoccupied or overly identified with experience. Noting can help us ‘step away’ so that we might see more clearly. For example, noting ‘wanting’ might pull us out of the preoccupation with something we want. This may not be immediate, but by repeatedly noting ‘wanting, wanting,’ one may be able to be aware of the wanting without being caught by it. As an antidote to drowning in strong emotion or obsessive thinking, mental noting is sometimes called a ‘life preserver’.

Noting can also help maintain a non-reactive form of attention. Calmly and equanimously noting what is happening, we are less likely to get caught up in emotional reactions. The stories of Mara, the god of temptation and distraction, visiting the Buddha illustrate this. The Buddha does not chase Mara away, nor does he give in. He simply looks at him directly and says, “Mara, I see you.” With this, Mara runs away. Similarly, noting ‘fear’ can be like saying, “fear, I see you.” Noting helps us to see mindfully while remaining free of what we see.

The tone of the inner voice that notes may reveal less-than-equanimous reactions to what we are trying to be mindful of. The noting may sound harsh, bored, scared, hesitant, or excited, to name just a few possibilities. By noticing and adjusting the tone, we may become more balanced and equanimous.

Each person needs to find his or her own way of noting – it isn’t a fixed technique. And as circumstances change, how one notes may change. Sometimes, what is most useful is calmly noting everything one is being mindful of. Other times, noting may be useful when one is easily distracted but not when one is settled. Some people only use noting when being mindful of particular experiences, such as thinking or feeling emotions. Others limit

Continued inside

SANGHA PROGRAMS & NEWS

2008 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

All IMC services are freely offered. The programs and operations are funded by donations and supported by volunteers. Here is a brief overview of the funds we received in 2008 and how they were used:

Dana received (25% reduction from 2007) \$86,957

Use of Funds

General Operations	\$ 59,131
Building Operations	\$9,044
Reserve for Residential Retreats	\$18,782
	\$86,957

Residential Retreat Fund Donations:	\$43,008
Residential Retreat Expenses	\$52,437
	-\$9,429

In 2008, the IMC Year-End Fund Drive brought in \$42,601. For 2009 we will continue to develop our capacity for offering the dharma and will use the money judiciously, mindful to keep some of it in reserve during these difficult economic times.

Thank you for your continuing generosity. All donations to IMC are fully tax deductible.

—Diana Clark, IMC Treasurer

NEW COMMUNITY LIAISON POSITION

IMC is pleased that Catherine Byers has begun to serve as our point person for information about how things are done at IMC. For basic information about IMC and IMC programs, you can still call or email our general info lines. For anything more involved, Catherine, as our new liaison, will either answer your questions or direct you to the appropriate person. For instance, she can help if a volunteer needs to know who to contact to do a task, or if someone would like to ask in more detail about our organization.

Many of you know Catherine from her long-time participation and support of IMC. Those who don't, please feel free to get to know her! Catherine can be reached at imc.liaison@gmail.com or 650/306-9264.

IMC WELCOMES NEW BOARD PRESIDENT

Due to increasing family care giving responsibilities, I resigned from the board and role of president in December. I am happy to announce that Kim Allen, who was our vice-president of the board, has taken on the role of president. Kim had been, in many ways, co-sharing the president role with me since July and I feel very confident that she will continue to be a dedicated leader and asset to IMC's organization. Kim brings to the board a dedicated and strong meditation practice, and in addition she enjoys practicing and teaching Qigong, and has recently completed a Master's Degree from Bainbridge Graduate Institute in sustainable business. Please join me in welcoming Kim as the new president of the board.

—Lori Wong

SUPPORT THE IMC LIBRARY

I'm pleased to see so many sangha members using the IMC library and hope you find it a valuable resource. So that books remain as accessible as possible, please keep them no longer than four weeks and return them to the box marked 'Book Return' in front of the shelves.

Our library was recently granted a small annual budget to acquire newer titles at Book Buyers, where we trade the donated books that are not needed for those that are. If you would like to support our book acquisition program, there are dana envelopes in the library earmarked for this purpose.

—Pat White (Volunteer Librarian)

MINDFULNESS, ATTITUDE AND THE MIND

A week of practice with Sayadaw U Tejaniya July 18-24.

IMC is privileged to host the Burmese monk, Sayadaw U Tejaniya. He teaches an approach to mindfulness emphasizing relaxation and careful attention to the attitude one has toward one's experience. U Tejaniya prefers to teach mindfulness in the context of people's daily life rather than intensive residential retreats. He primarily teaches through discussion in a question and answer format that focuses on people's experience in applying mindfulness practice in their lives. This is a unique opportunity to study with one of the renowned meditation teachers of Burma. See *Schedule of Events* for details.

WHAT VOLUNTEERS DO: ANSWERING VOICEMAIL

IMC receives 1 to 3 voicemail messages most days. We have a group of three volunteers who rotate on a monthly basis to respond to messages within 24 hours. The most common questions are about class schedules, whether it is necessary to register for classes, requests for a newsletter or a copy of *Issue At Hand*, and whether IMC has a membership. The most important skill a voicemail volunteer needs is a friendly attitude and a thorough knowledge of the IMC website and newsletter. It is helpful to know a bit about how IMC works, who does what and who to contact with a question.

Currently we need 1 or 2 people to help with voicemail. It is a job that is done at home by calling in to our voice mail box. To volunteer for this or any other position, contact imc.volunteerdirector@gmail.com.

VESAK CELEBRATION: BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY

After our Sunday morning sitting on May 17, Gil will give a short talk on Vesak, the most important Buddhist holiday. Then at 10:30 am we will have a short celebration with the children and teens from our community.

This will be followed by tea in the community hall. Any children who would like to participate can arrive at 10 am to either hear a story about the Buddha or to help decorate the flower pagoda we will use for the ceremony.

INTRODUCTION TO INSIGHT MEDITATION CENTER

On Sunday, May 31, IMC will offer an evening to learn about the IMC community and how our center operates. Hosted by past and current presidents of IMC, the program includes the history of IMC, an overview of our programs, groups, and events. It will also present some of the teachings that underlie how we are organized, including our all-dana culture. Both new and long-time participants are encouraged to come for an evening of welcome and community building.

ONLINE COURSE: THE FIVE HINDRANCES

Audiodharma will offer a 10 week online course on The Five Hindrances from May 31st to August 15th. The course is open to those who have completed the Introduction to Mindfulness Meditation Course or the equivalent. Anyone may audit.

The Five Hindrances are the major obstacles to meditation and liberating insight. They are: sensual desire or greed, aversion or ill-will, sloth and torpor, restlessness, and doubt. The course includes audio recordings, written materials, exercises and reflections. Ines Freedman, as the online teacher for the course, will provide further teachings and email guidance. Additional teachers will offer weekly support by e-mail, phone or instant messenger. For info: www.audiodharma.org/onlinecourses.html.

NOTES FROM A VOLUNTEER

After being in a couple of spiritual communities that had upheavals in the early 80s, I was less than thrilled about getting involved in another spiritual community. However, after my wife's great enthusiasm about the teacher at IMC's Intro Course, I decided to check it out and started actively attending IMC events in 1995. One Monday night Gil asked if someone could correlate a survey. Being an engineer, I enjoy those things, so I volunteered. I was asked to present the results at their Board meeting. Through a series of unexpected events, this task led me to become IMC's second President. I was President of the unincorporated Center for 2 years and the founding President for another 4 years until we moved to Redwood City, then the 2nd Treasurer for 3 years, stepping down off the Board in 2004. In those early days we did not have the volunteer structure we have today. As tasks came up, I ended up doing many of them (event manager, mailing list, taking newsletters to the post office, etc.) It has been a great honor for me to serve this community and the experience has been one of the most fulfilling of my life. I still volunteer as one of the bookkeepers on the Financial Committee and I am now the Treasurer of the Sati Center. In 2007, I was asked if I would rejoin the Board to give some continuity to the past. I agreed and now am working on several projects for the board including an inter-board meeting with other Vipassana groups.

—Steve Gasner

DANA—All teachings at IMC are offered freely according to the Buddhist tradition of *dana*. Our center and its teachers are supported entirely by your generosity. Thank you.

Mental Noting, *cont'd. from front page*

their noting to naming only what is distracting. And some people find that it is never helpful to use mental noting; they prefer a more silent form of knowing.

The noting practice has a number of pitfalls. It can become rote or mechanical. When one notices this, it's often useful to pause and relax before starting again. Another hazard is focusing too much on noting at the expense of being mindful. One version of this is the 'check-list approach' to mindfulness – one believes it is enough to simply note an experience. Noting is mostly a slight nudge to encourage mindfulness, so that attentiveness to the felt experience increases. Another pitfall is that noting may become an attempt to control or drive one's experience instead of simply recognizing it. Or it may be used to create an artificial distance from experience: naming becomes a substitute for feeling. Relaxing and allowing the mindfulness to become more receptive can help with this.

Noting can become a hindrance to meditation if one starts thinking about what word to use. Sometimes beginners to mental noting are too concerned with the 'right' note. The most obvious label is good enough. If a vague note like "here" or "this" helps one stay present, it has fulfilled its primary function. While precision in noting can sometimes sharpen mindfulness and help with insight, there is no need to analyze one's way to greater precision.

Some people find that as the mind becomes more peaceful in meditation they may need to adjust the relative 'loudness' or 'intensity' of the noting to keep it in harmony with the meditative stillness. As the mind becomes quieter, so should the mental noting. It can become a softer and softer whisper. At times words are no longer needed – a soft "hmm" may suffice.

A basic principle for the practice of mental noting is to use it when it is helpful and to avoid it when it is not. Mindfulness practice aims to cultivate awareness, insight and liberation. It can be quite satisfying when noting supports these aims. It can be a reminder that all of one's faculties can be used in the service of freedom, including our cognitive functions such as naming our experience.

—Gil Fronsdal



REMEMBERING DON FLAXMAN

Don Flaxman was a dear friend and supporter of IMC. He died at home on January 16. From being president of the Spirit Rock board to advising us at IMC, he was very important in the establishment of vipassana centers in the Bay Area. His own generosity, in all its forms, was an inspiration. His goodwill and joy lives on in our community. He gave a number of memorable dharma talks at IMC on generosity, his favorite topic, which can be found at audiodharma.org.

Insight Meditation Center

108 Birch Street

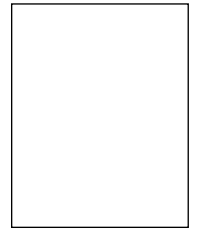
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www.insightmeditationcenter.org

Email: insightmeditationcenter@gmail.com

650/599-3456

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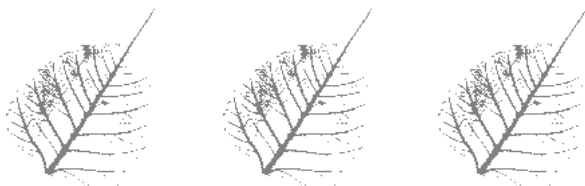
ARE YOU BUYING OR SELLING A HOME?

You can help IMC and save money. Carol Collins is a sangha member who was a long-time real estate broker and is now retired. If you are thinking of selling or purchasing a home, Carol will locate an ethical, conscientious realtor, will counsel you through the process and will donate her entire finder's fee to IMC.

All referral fees are used to support our residential retreats. For more information contact Carol Collins at 408/354-5893 or ccollinsc@verizon.net.

PARKING AROUND IMC

IMC now has only one accessibility parking space in our own parking lot. To make IMC more accessible for those in need, please avoid parking within half a block of IMC if possible. This will also help make residential parking easier for our immediate neighbors. Thank you.



For general information about IMC contact either insightmeditationcenter@gmail.com or 650/599-3456. For other inquiries contact imc.liaison@gmail.com.

LITERATURE COUNTER POLICY

FOR NON-IMC EVENT FLYERS

To maintain IMC as a peaceful, clutter-free place of refuge, we ask that you:

- Display non-IMC flyers only for local, dana-based events related to Buddhism or meditation.
- Display non-IMC flyers in the reserved section of the counter, not on the walls, next to the statues, or on any other surfaces.
- Do not display commercial advertisements such as fee-based classes, services, etc.
- Do not display politically divisive, aggressive, or hostile material, out of respect for the many differing opinions within our Sangha.

For a more detailed description, please see our website: www.insightmeditationcenter.org/imc-about.html#imc-Policies

To sign up for either or both of our Email Lists, go to www.insightmeditationcenter.org and click "Subscribe".

MAILING LIST OPTIONS AND CHANGE OF ADDRESS

To be added or removed from the Mailing List, or to update address, phone, or e-mail—contact Cindy Heyer, fox.paws@comcast.net 650/712-0231.

NEWSLETTER questions—contact Chris Clifford, imc.newsletter@gmail.com 650/967-8741.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

April thru June 2009

WEEKLY MEDITATION AND TALKS

MONDAY EVENING SITTING AND TALK

7:30 to 9pm. A 45-minute sitting and a 45-minute dharma talk.

WEDNESDAY MORNING HALF-DAY RETREAT

9:30am to 12:15pm. Sitting and walking meditation, led by Gil Fronsdal or guest teachers. Bring lunch, informal discussion afterwards. You may attend any part of the morning.

- 9:30 am - Sitting • 10:15am - Walking
- 11:00 am - Sitting • 11:45am - Dharmette (Brief Talk)
- Noon to 12:15pm - Temple Cleaning

THURSDAY EVENING SITTING AND TALK

7:30 to 9pm. A 30-minute sitting is followed by a talk and time for questions.

SUNDAY MORNING SITTINGS AND TALK

- 1st Sitting - 8:30am • Walking Meditation - 9:10am
- 2nd Sitting - 9:25am • Talk - 10 to 10:45am

Vegetarian Potluck Brunch — Last Sunday each month at 11am. All are welcome. Contact Di or Dave Tatro 650/595-4260.

MEDITATION INSTRUCTION

BASIC MEDITATION INSTRUCTION

- Every Thursday evening 6:15 to 7:15pm, prior to the 7:30pm sitting and talk.
- 1st Monday evening each month, 6:15 to 7:15pm, prior to the 7:30pm sitting and talk.
- 1st Thursday morning each month, 10:30 to 11:30am.

INTRODUCTORY COURSE IN MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

The basic instructions in Insight Meditation will be taught sequentially, starting with mindfulness of breathing, followed by mindfulness of the body, emotions, thinking & the application of mindfulness in daily life. No pre-registration.

- 5 Tuesday Mornings: May 12–June 6, 9 to 10:30am, with Andrea Fella
- 5 Tuesday Evenings: July 7–August 4, 7:30 to 9pm, with Andrea Fella

INTRODUCTION TO MINDFULNESS SERIES II WITH GIL FRONSDAL

Wednesdays, May 13, 20, 27, and June 3, 7:30 to 9pm
Building on the IMC basic instruction, this class continues the introduction to mindfulness. Building on the basic introduction to mindfulness series, this class focuses on further foundations to the practice.

ONLINE COURSE: THE FIVE HINDRANCES

May 31st – August 15, with Gil Fronsdal and Ines Freedman.

For info: www.audiodharma.org/onlinecourses.html

NON- RESIDENTIAL RETREATS

ONE-DAY MEDITATION RETREATS

- Saturday, March 28, 9am to 5pm—**Women's Mindfulness Retreat** with Andrea Fella
- Saturday, April 4, 2009, 9am to 4:30pm—**Enlightened Imagination** with Carolyn Dille
- Saturday, April 25, 8:30 to 5pm—**Daylong Retreat** with Gil Fronsdal
- Saturday, May 16, 9am to 4:30pm—**Metta Retreat** with Andrea Fella
- Saturday, June 6, 6am to 9pm **Intensive Daylong Retreat** with Gil Fronsdal. Interviews with Gil available, you may attend any part of the day. Bring breakfast & lunch. Light supper provided.
- Saturday, June 27, 9:30am to 4:30pm—**The Four Elements** with Bob Stahl

RESIDENTIAL RETREATS

IMC SPONSORED RETREATS

There is no cost for IMC sponsored retreats. Donations welcome. Contact info@insightmeditationcenter.org or 650/599-3456 unless otherwise noted. Registration opens 4 months prior to event.

- May 3 - 10 with Gil Fronsdal & Andrea Fella. Hidden Villa, Los Altos.
- Memorial Weekend, May 23 - 25, 2009 with Andrea Fella. Jikoji Retreat Center, Los Gatos.
- August 19 - 23 with Andrea Fella & Heather Martin. Jikoji Retreat Center, Los Gatos.
- September 13 - 27 with Gil Fronsdal. Hidden Villa, Los Altos. For senior practitioners.
- September 25 - 27 with Andrea Fella and Pam Weiss. Jikoji Retreat Center, Los Gatos.
- October 11 - 18 with Steve Armstrong & Kamala Masters. Hidden Villa, Los Altos.

OTHER RETREATS WITH GIL FRONSDAL

Spirit Rock Retreats. See www.spiritrock.org for info.

- August 5 – 9 **Family Retreat** with Ajahn Amaro, Gil Fronsdal, Betsy Rose, Heather Sundberg
- August 14 – 23 **Vajrapani Retreat** with Mary Grace Orr, Gil Fronsdal and John Travis
- December 26 – January 3 **New Year's Retreat** with Gil Fronsdal, John Travis, Eugene Cash, Sharda Rogell, Janice Clarfield

IMC YOUTH PROGRAMS

In response to parents' requests, IMC began a children's program in 1996. In recent years we have received numerous requests to expand our offering of youth programs. Fortunately, a number of talented and wise adults have offered to help. We have designed four age-appropriate programs beginning with kindergarten aged kids and ending with 12th grade high school students.

With youth programs we appreciate knowing ahead of time who is coming so we can arrange for adequate snacks.

DHARMA SPROUTS – (K- 2nd Grade) Led by Liz Powell and others. With a still-to-be-determined schedule this will be a program of story, songs, yoga, craft, and games. Parents may either participate or we may offer a parents' discussion group in our conference room. The first event will be on Sunday May 17 from 11:30 to 1:30 after our Buddha's Birthday Celebration, which children and their parents are also invited to attend. Based on interest at this event we will decide on other meeting times. If you plan to attend, please contact Liz at epowell@aol.com.

DHARMA ROCKS – (3rd – 8th Grade) Led by Misha Merrill. Second Sunday of the month, 5:15 to 7:15pm (April meeting is on April 19). Includes fun, interactive, community-building games and crafts, pizza, and a half-hour of practice and dharma. Hilary Borison, 650/575-2052; hborison@sbcglobal.net.

COMING-OF-AGE PROGRAM – (7th and 8th Grade) Starting in September 2010. Monthly meetings for youths who commit for the entire year aiming to provide support through the transition from childhood to adolescence, laying the strong foundation for the teen age years. There will be two groups, one for girls and one for boys. Contact Lauren Silver silverlauren@gmail.com.

DHARMA TEENS – (High School) Led by Mary Hofstedt and Alicia McLucas. First Sunday of the month, 5 to 7pm. A safe and fun space where teens can learn to apply the practices and principles of mindfulness to support their self-discovery, empowerment, and fulfillment. It is also intended to be a trusting environment where teens can discuss among themselves and adult facilitators, issues that are important in their lives. Contact Alicia 650/361-8800.

SPECIAL FAMILY EVENT: VESAK – BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Sunday, May 17 10am to 1:30pm. Come with cut flowers at 10am to decorate pagoda (in IMC parking lot)

- 10:30am – Procession into meditation hall for Buddha's Birthday celebration.
- 11am – Pot Luck Snack—bring food to share
- 11:30 - 1:30 – Inaugural Dharma Sprouts Program. (K to 2nd Grade)
- 11:30-1:30 – Special Dharma Rocks program (3rd to 8th grade)

YOGA

Suitable for all levels, including absolute beginners. Bring a large towel and sticky mat, if you have one. Mats are also available in class. Taught by Terry Lesser.

MONDAY EVENING YOGA

6:30 to 7:15pm. Join us for Yoga before evening meditation.

THURSDAY MORNING YOGA AND SITTING MEDITATION

8 to 10:15am.

SPECIAL EVENTS

DHARMA PRACTICE DAYS: THE FIVE HINDRANCES

Apr 3 (Restlessness), May 1 (Doubt), Jun 5 (Hindrances in Depth), 9:30am to 3:30pm, with Gil Fronsdal. Meditation, teachings and discussions. Bring lunch. Rather than allowing hindrances to remain as obstacles it is important to learn how to transform them into stepping stones to greater mindfulness, concentration and wisdom. Each of these Dharma Practice days will focus on one of the hindrances through teachings, meditation, and discussion. For those participating in the entire series, Ines Freedman will be available for additional support through practice discussions/interviews. Everyone is welcome.

PRACTICE DISCUSSIONS WITH ANDREA FELLA

Most Thursdays, before the evening program, half hour one-on-one practice discussions about mindfulness practice. Discuss with Andrea the details of your personal meditation practice as well as more general questions about Buddhist practice and its place in your life. Not counseling sessions. To schedule, contact imc.thursday.interviews@gmail.com, or call IMC at 650/599-3456. (Email contact is most direct).

WOMEN'S DAYLONG RETREAT WITH ANDREA FELLA

March 28th, 9am to 5pm. Offers a space for women to gather in silence and community. Alternate periods of sitting and walking meditation, with instruction, questions, and a Dharma Talk. At the end of the day, we will gather in community to share refreshment and mindful speech. Bring your own lunch (will be in silence) and refreshment to share for the afternoon gathering, if you wish.

ENLIGHTENED IMAGINATION WITH CAROLYN DILLE

Saturday, April 4, 9am to 4:30pm

How do the Buddha's seven factors of enlightenment—mindfulness, investigation, perseverance, joy, calm, concentration, and equanimity—inform the creative work we do? During this retreat we'll explore these possibilities through meditation, writing and drawing, and inquiry. Please bring materials for writing and drawing, and a lunch if you like.

Carolyn is a poet and writer who facilitates writing and creativity practices for retreats, workshops, and groups. She has been practicing Buddhist and other meditative forms for over 30 years and teaches dharma in the Vipassana Insight and Soto Zen traditions.

SCHEDULE pg. 3

ON BEING EMOTIONAL

Starting on April 20, Gil Fronsdal will give a series of Monday evening talks on applying mindfulness to such key emotions as fear, anger, sadness, love, joy and peace.

AN EVENING OF BUDDHIST CHANTING

With Thanissaro Bhikkhu (Than Geoff), Friday, May 1, 7:30pm to 9pm. Than Geoff will lead us in traditional Theravadan chanting. Timeless in meaning, these beautiful chants connect us to the ancient foundations of our tradition in an accessible manner. If sufficient interest is shown in doing so, we may make this a regular event. Organized by Steve Gasner and Bill Kostura.

ONE BREATH AT A TIME: BUDDHISM AND THE TWELVE STEPS

With Kevin Griffin, 5 Tuesdays, May 5 - June 2, 7 to 9 pm. The Buddha said clinging is the cause of suffering. Twelve Step programs work with the deepest forms of clinging—our addictions. Through meditation practices, interactive exercises, lecture, and discussion, we will explore the ways that Buddhism and the Steps complement each other. Break down common assumptions about Twelve Step language and Buddhist teachings to come to a new understanding of the recovery process, how bringing the two traditions together can deepen our spiritual life. Open to all who are interested. You need not be in a Twelve Step program nor be a meditator. Beginners & newcomers welcome. *Kevin Griffin is the author of One Breath at a Time: Buddhism and the Twelve Steps and the forthcoming A Burning Desire: God, Buddha, and the Path of Recovery. He is a leader in the mindful recovery movement and a co-founder of the Buddhist Recovery Network. Trained as a Community Dharma Leader at Spirit Rock Meditation Center, he teaches at treatment centers, Buddhist centers, professional conferences, and colleges across the U.S.*

INTRODUCTION TO MINDFULNESS, SERIES II WITH GIL FRONSDAL

Wednesdays, May 13, 20, 27, and June 3, 7:30 to 9pm
Building on the basic introduction to mindfulness series, this class focuses on further foundations to the practice.

PRACTICE IN DAILY LIFE WITH ANDREA FELLA

5 Thursday Evenings, May 14 - June 11 from 7:30pm to 9pm
Our sitting meditation practice might bring us some calm or spaciousness, but how do we carry the practice of mindfulness off the cushion? Andrea will teach creative practices for engaging mindfulness in all aspects of our lives, to foster a sense of calm and happiness; practices integral in the path towards freedom.

METTA RETREAT WITH ANDREA FELLA

Saturday, May 16, 9am to 4:30pm
A daylong retreat of metta or lovingkindness meditation.

INTRODUCTION TO INSIGHT MEDITATION CENTER

Sunday, May 31, 7:30 to 9pm
This is an evening to learn about the IMC community and how our center operates. It is a good introductory evening to welcome people new to IMC.

MEDITATION ON THE FOUR PRIMARY ELEMENTS

With Bob Stahl, Saturday, June 27, 9:30am to 4:30pm. The meditation on the four primary elements supports one to penetrate beyond the normal level of conceptual labels and categories. One begins to connect directly with the elements of solidity, liquidity, motion, and temperature within the body and discover their intrinsically impermanent and insubstantial natures.

Bob Stahl is a long-time practitioner of insight meditation who lived in a Buddhist monastery for over eight years. He now directs Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction programs in Bay Area medical centers, and teaches at Vipassana Santa Cruz. Bob is also a husband and a father of two sons.

MINDFULNESS, ATTITUDE AND THE MIND—A WEEK OF TEACHINGS WITH SAYADAW U TEJANIYA

Saturday – Friday, July 18-24

Sayadaw U Tejaniya teaches vipassana meditation based on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness. Sayadaw's teaching is sometimes referred to as mindfulness of mind (*cittanupassana*) but actually he teaches all four foundations of mindfulness with an emphasis on awareness of the qualities of mind. He encourages us to look at how we meditate. What mindset are we meditating with? What sort of ideas are we meditating with? What attitude are we meditating with? Are we aware of the defilements of mind?

Public Sessions: An Intensive Weekend

Saturday, July 18, 9am* to 4:30pm, Sunday, July 19, 9:20am to 4:30pm. Guided meditations, instructions and extensive questions and answer sessions. Integrated with the usual Sunday morning program. No registration required. Contact: heather@ahearthspace.com

**Plan to arrive on time at 9:00am. Sayadaw gives instructions at the beginning of the day.*

Dharma Inquiry and Exploration

Monday - Friday, July 20 - 24. Pre-registration required. Limited to 40 people. Participants will be assigned two interview sessions between Monday and Thursday, to be held either mid-morning or mid-afternoon. For registered participants only, optional sittings 8:30 to 9:30am and 2 to 3pm; IMC will be open for sitting and walking between the two interview groups. Friday will be an all-day program of discussion and explorations with U Tejaniya for all registered participants. Registration opens March 15th. If necessary, a lottery will be held on April 15th.

To register (for application form):

<http://www.insightmeditationcenter.org/prog-special.html>

Scroll to the end of the section for event description and form; contact Andrea at Non.Residential.Retreat@gmail.com;

or info IMC at 650/599-3456.

Sayadaw U Tejaniya started practicing and studying dhamma with his teacher the late Shwe Oo Min Sayadaw (the Gold Cave Hermitage Monastic Teacher) when he was thirteen years old. Ordained as a Buddhist monk for more than 10 years, he teaches meditation at Shwe Oo Min Dhammasukha Tawya in Yangon, Myanmar (Rangoon, Burma).

SATI CENTER

These events are presented by Sati Center: www.sati.org or 650/223-0311 for more information.

SUTTA STUDY PROGRAM WITH GIL FRONSDAL

September 12, 2008 to June 12, 2009. A ten month course on the *Majjhima Nikaya* (Middle Length Discourses) one of the oldest records of the Buddha's teachings. Taking the entire course is recommended. Fridays, 9:30am to 3:30pm: 4/24, 5/22, 6/12.

SELVES AND NOT-SELVES WITH THANISSARO BHIKKHU

Saturday, May 2, 2009, 9am to 5pm

The Buddha refused to state that the self exists or doesn't exist, yet he frequently used perceptions of self and not-self as skillful means in his teachings. This course—through readings, discussion, and meditation—will explore the many meanings of 'self' in the Buddha's self strategies and not-self strategies for gaining freedom from clinging and suffering.

Please bring your lunch. If you would like, please bring food to offer for Than Geoff and other monastics in attendance.

Thanissaro Bhikkhu (Geoffrey DeGraff) has been a Theravadan monk since 1976. He is currently the abbot of Metta Forest Monastery, a monastic and lay meditation community in San Diego County. He is the translator of Handful of Leaves, a five-volume anthology of selections from the Pali suttas, the Dhammapada, and many Thai meditation guides. He is also the author of Mind Like Fire Unbound, and The Wings to Awakening, commentaries on discourses from the Pali canon.

SUPPORT GROUPS

(A) Those Experiencing Life-Threatening Illnesses

Wednesdays, 1:30 to 3pm

(B) Those Experiencing Chronic Health Challenges

Wednesdays, 3:30 to 5pm

Meetings include brief sittings and consideration of pertinent Dharma topics; the primary purpose of each group is to provide each participant an opportunity to share personal challenges, triumphs, hopes, and fears with individuals facing a similar situation. Before attending either group for the first time, please contact Mick Bennett, hmbennett@sbcglobal.net, or 650/368-2518.

DHARMA FRIENDS

Dharma Friends encourages spiritually-based friendships and a sense of community in our sangha. If you are interested in joining the Dharma Friends Steering Committee, contact Anne Foster, afoster@rawbw.com, 650/591-1285.

- **Full Moon Gathering for Women**—Friday, April 3, June 12, 7:15 to 9:15pm. Meditation and dharma teachings with local teachers, sharing and creativity. RSVP Nicole drncherok@gmail.com.
- **Dharma Friends Steering Committee Planning Meeting**—Sunday, May 3, 11:15am to 12:30pm. IMC conference room. Come join us! Anne Foster, 650/591-1285 afoster@rawbw.com.

- **Dharma Friends Hike** - Sun May 17th, 11:15am to 2:15pm. Short hike at a nearby park, location TBD. Contact Marianna, taraihito@yahoo.com.

Recurring Dharma Friends Events

- **Dharma Friends Brunch**—(1st Sundays) Gather at IMC by the kitchen at 11:15 am and choose a local restaurant for brunch. Contact Dwight zydeholic@yahoo.com.
- **Fiction Book Group**—Once/Month, Sundays, 6:30 to 8:30pm. We meet at the home of a member, usually in Menlo Park. Contact Rainbow, rainbowspirit@earthlink.net.
- **Cinema Sanity**—Occasional weekend evenings. Know of a movie with a Dharma message you'd like to see with some dharma friends? Contact JimPodolske, 650/968-6168, James.R.Podolske@nasa.gov.
- **Dharma-Inspired Book Group**—5:30 to 7pm. Apr 3, May 1 & June 5. *A Year to Live* by Stephen Levine, IMC Social Hall. Contact: Jeff, cjhylton@earthlink.net.

RELATED SITTING GROUPS

COASTSIDE VIPASSANA MEDITATION GROUP

Meets Wednesdays in Montara, 7 to 8:30pm. For information and location, www.coastsidevipassana.org

INSIGHT MEDITATION SOUTH BAY WITH SHAILA CATHERINE

2094 Grant Rd, Mtn View. Weekly Sitting & Talk—Tuesdays, 7:30 to 9pm. Introduction to Meditation class – first Tuesday each month, 6:30 to 7:20pm. www.imsb.org, doug.forehand@sun.com.

LA HONDA SITTING GROUP

Every Tuesday night, 7 to 8pm. For information contact Cindy Crowe-Urgo at brwthus@sbcglobal.net

OAKLAND MONDAY DROP-IN MEDITATION GROUP

Instruction 5:15pm; meditation/discussion 5:30 to 6:30pm. Unitarian Church, 14th/Castro. Rebecca Dixon 510/482-2032.

YOUNG ADULTS MEDITATION GROUP FORMING

Contact Aaron Chavira at IMC.iGeneration@gmail.com.

SAN JOSE SANGHA

1041 Morse Street, San Jose. Contact Berget, 408/255-2783 bbjelane@gmail.com Website: www.geocities.com/sjsangha

- Wednesday Evening Sitting & Teaching, 7:30 to 9pm
- April 4, 9am to 2:30pm **Introductory Daylong** with instructions.
- April 25, 9:30 to 2:30 **Meditation and Interplay** with Berget and Penny Mann. Bringing mindfulness into movement playfully.
- May 16 and June 20, 9:30am to 12:15pm—Half-day retreat.
- **Meditation and Creativity with Yoga Weekend Retreat** July 31 to August 2, Jikoji Retreat Center, Los Gatos, with Caroline Dille, Berget Jelane, and Terry Lesser (yoga). An opportunity to integrate mind and body through mindfulness, creativity, and yoga. Bring writing and/or drawing materials, or musical instrument. Contact Berget 408/255-2783, or terrylesser@gmail.com.