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# .....connections.....

Number 5

Newsletter of the Regina Insight Meditation Community

Spring/Summer/Fall, 2003

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## Connect—ed

“.....connections.....” is late again. You probably noticed! I am finding difficulty in assembling in a timely way all the different pieces of information that go into each issue. So it is that I am making the finishing touches to this issue at the time that I should be putting together the Fall/Winter edition.

There are some benefits from the delay, however. For example, Dana has just completed putting together next year's retreat and class schedule, so if you are planning to attend any of these events, you can mark off the dates. Also, I can briefly report on the celebrations that were held in Regina when Sharda was here to mark the Tenth Anniversary of the Regina Insight Meditation Community. They started on Wednesday 10th September with a pot-luck supper followed by a brief sitting and the sharing of reminiscences of RIMC's unfolding over the years. More than 40 sangha members were present for the occasion. Two days later, about 17 sangha members who have been active in our community over many years, gathered at Dana's for a special ceremony. It was a time to share

reflections of the benefits, both personal and communal, of the Buddha, the dharma and the sangha in their lives. Sharda's meditation retreat wound up the anniversary week. With Sharda's guidance, almost 40 participants looked deeply into many aspects of “Celebrating Joy,” a wonderfully appropriate theme!

In Issue 4 of “.....connections.....,” the suggested focus for the Fall/Winter 2003-04 issue was “retreat,” and the deadline was the 15th September (now long past!). Because no contributions on the suggested theme have yet come in, because we are in the midst of our Tenth Anniversary, and because many of our sangha could not take part in the celebrations in Regina, Sharda and the Sangha Council are keen that our next issue focus on what our sangha means to you. We would warmly welcome a paragraph or two from you about the place of dharma and sangha in your life. If you can send your contribution to me by, please, 15th December, I will try my best to get the next issue of “.....connections.....” out to you before the end of January.

*Chris Gilboy*

## On Wisdom

As I enter into the blessing of a month-long silent retreat this March at the new Forest Refuge in Massachusetts, I wonder what the world will be like when I walk out. I have a choice whether to hear news of the world or to be in complete silence, leaving the socio-political world far behind, so to speak. Yet, the situation in the Middle East has been heating up for months, and March is a critical time for some major decisions. It is difficult to know what choice to make. I do know that I will pray for peace every

morning and every evening.

Buddhist teachings simply state that wisdom is present when our thoughts and actions lead toward peace and harmony, and lead away from pain and conflict. Accordingly, I can look around at our global community for what appears wise and what does not. In truth, our world is not so different now than it was 2500 years ago during the time of the Buddha. The predicament of humanity was called samsara. This word refers to the wheel of birth and death, or the wheel of suffering. Because we don't know our true purpose for this human existence, we find ourselves searching here and there for some peace of mind but don't know where to find it. We only find ourselves going round and round looking for something we think might bring some level of fulfillment. Because of our inability to find a way off this wheel, we are caught in the pain of our own confusion and feel the stress, or the meaninglessness of life. This leads to all kinds of inner agitation and restlessness that gives rise to inner and outer harm, and leads us further away from freedom.

The Buddha's teachings are wisdom teachings because he showed us the way off the wheel, or the way to “the final release.” We experience this release like a bird being freed from a cage, or a man being freed from his prison cell after a long period of time. All of the teachings that show

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us the way off the wheel (or the path to freedom) are contained in three aspects: sila, samadhi and panna. These three words refer to ethical conduct, meditation and wisdom.

We begin with ethical guidelines for our behaviour so that we have a way to reflect on what causes suffering to our self and others. And we practice meditation as a method to investigate our own mind in order to discover the forces of confusion and how they govern our reality. As we understand our mind, we draw on our innate wisdom to bring about inner and outer transformation. The teachings begin with accessing our wisdom and end in the culmination of wisdom – a wisdom that reveals a true reality, where we see the way things really are. This reality is not necessarily the reality our thinking mind is dictating to us.

Knowing true reality arises from an intuitive wisdom, as opposed to an intellectual wisdom. In our culture, we are encouraged to cultivate our rational, logical, intellectual minds but we rarely are encouraged to sense into an inner knowing that does not depend on our thinking mind, a knowing that occurs just by being. This knowing arises when we are living in the present moment and are aware of our thoughts, feelings, sensations and the situation we

are part of, and, at the same time, we are in contact with presence itself. Being present does not take much effort, but requires recognition – simply knowing what is going on. Only when we are present inwardly and outwardly and begin to listen can we access the wisdom that lies within. You see, I am wisdom and you are wisdom already. Wisdom is waiting quietly for us, like the precious jewels buried under the house. They will remain buried there until they are discovered.

As a way to begin, do at least one thing consciously every day that draws on your intuitive wisdom – an activity that is motivated from deep within your being. It may be an act of kindness toward yourself or another, or an act of letting go – of renunciation, or forgiveness, or having the courage to begin changing a life-long habit. It may be to make a statement about something you deeply care about, or to take time for silence and meditation, or for being in nature. Or, most importantly, have the intention to be present to life as it unfolds, moment after moment. Can your heart bear it?

In loving-kindness,

*Sharda Rogell*

## The Wisdom of Experience

As a child, I believed wisdom was something that came with age, a reward for hanging in with life, like a seniors' card that gets you into the movies for a reduced rate. I also believed that wisdom and age would allow me to be listened to as everyone listened to my grandmother when she made pithy comments on the world as she saw it.

Many life experiences later, I realize the perfection of wisdom requires more than just hanging in, and the prize at the end isn't automatic. It takes seeing clearly, good guidance and practice.

The Buddha's teachings help by distinguishing three kinds of wisdom: wisdom acquired through knowledge, from books, talks, classes and study groups; wisdom acquired from reflection on the dharma in relation to life and the implications of such truths as impermanence, death, and the Eight-Fold Path; and wisdom from which I've learned the most, almost always the hard way, which comes from deep, direct experience of the dharma.

Ajahn Chah speaks of the relationship between the three kinds of wisdom in this way: "Teaching and listening to dharma, that this is such and that is such, are not really dharma. They are words to point something out so you can enter and see. Speaking to help people see the truth is skillful means, or ways of teaching, the dharma of study. When it is only speech without actually seeing, when you merely only want to learn the words to be able to repeat them, no benefit comes. When you apply the words and see that this is the way things are, the unchanging constant law arising according to causes and conditions without self or essence, this is what the Buddha was actually teaching about."

He outlines specifically what this means in practice:

"The Buddha taught us to know the sense bases, our points of contact. The eye contacts forms and sends them "in" to become sights. The ears make contact with sounds, the nose makes contact with odours, the tongue makes contact with tastes, the body makes contact with tactile sensations, and so awareness arises. Where awareness arises is where we should look and see things as they are. If we don't know these things as they really are, we will either fall in love with them or hate them. Where these sensations arise is where we can become enlightened, where wisdom can arise."

We can agree with this intellectually, and might even recall it at times in practice or day-to-day, but when we know it in a deeper way, that is the arising of wisdom. I had one of these simple, direct, know-it-in-my-bones experiences while sitting the recent three-month retreat at I.M.S.

Near the end of the second month, in mid-November, I set out for a daily after-lunch walk on the "three-mile loop." Winter had come early, and continued with intermittent rain and snow, a horrific ice storm, winds, and freezing temperatures. Dressing for a walk on any day was a small lifetime of mindful moments in itself, because, as a Vancouverite, I had a limited amount of heavy duty outdoor gear. I set out wearing jeans over long johns, wool socks over cotton, and New Balance 850s as my only outdoor shoes. A Gore-tex anorak went over short polartec jacket over fleece vest over turtleneck, hood up over forehead-earband, and scarf wrapped over and around head and face.

The weather on this particular day was later identified as the worst of the retreat. I was the only person to venture off the grounds although I didn't know this at the time. However, when I couldn't see the road for the skiff of blowing snow, and icy pellets were stinging the exposed skin around my eyes, I did know I was in a blizzard.

Why did I keep walking?

Because the stormy outer landscape was no worse than what my inner landscape had been for the past two months. It was just business as usual. Sitting, walking and lying down; hours and days and weeks infused with irritation and aversion. I felt as though both my physical and emotional bodies were permanently bound in barbed wire.

My room, my yogi job, and especially the weather were all unsatisfying. The mind was full of images of wrongs done to me, wrongs I had done to others and a lifetime of unskillful choices, self-judgement and doubt. And painful emotions. It was my teachers who helped me stay in touch with the wider perspective, convincing me this was a process of deep purification and somehow mindfulness kept me in touch with the wisdom of the practice.

That day, as I set out, mindful of the cold wind stinging my face and ice underfoot, I began muttering a familiar mantra: “aversion, cold; aversion, stinging; aversion, aversion.” And then, after quite some time, something began to feel different. My body began to feel easy, and

my feet light. The wind was still blowing in my face, but it seemed to be holding me up. The ice pellets felt fresh on my skin. I gradually became aware that the tone of my voice was changing, and then the words. I heard myself saying, “happy, happy. I'm happy, happy.” And I was. I seemed to be floating down the road in happiness although my toes were becoming numb, my nose and eyes were streaming and I'd long since given up on my fingers.

Back at the main building, I stood outside in the storm, somehow unable to go in. It was still blowing and that was fine. My eyelashes were freezing together, and that was fine. My nose felt frostbitten and that was fine. I had been suffering and now I was happy – better than fine.

But what had happened? Through the mystery and power of mindfulness, the inner landscape had changed and that's all that was needed. Something deep inside let go to a greater understanding, let go to the way things are at a depth I hadn't realized before. I know now, in a much more fundamental way, one that goes beyond words, really, that it's the inner landscape, not the outer, that determines the difference between happiness and suffering. Wisdom? It feels like it, and I think Proust says it quite well, in this way: “We don't receive wisdom; we must discover it for ourselves after a journey no one can take for us or spare us.”

*Joanne Broatch*

## From Dana

### Teachings from Mother India

As I have just returned from three months away in India, it seems like a good opportunity for me to reflect on, and share with you, what it is about being in India that so nourishes my dharma practice. If I'm honest, being in exotic countries with very different cultures, colours and ways has always been a strong pull for me. But being in India goes much deeper than that. As I was reflecting on the theme of this issue of “.....connections.....,” wisdom, and what to write for this article, it was very clear that being India points out to me in no uncertain terms the truth of the way things are. It's so easy in our western lifestyle with all the social conventions to miss reality, but in India it is not. I feel it's important for my practice and my life to be reminded of the reality of life and death, that life is quite uncontrollable, and that the world does not revolve around my wishes and needs. Unlike in the West, it's common in India to see people who are ill, a corpse being carried on a litter to the burning grounds, people – often children – who are living on the streets with literally nothing other than the rags they have on their backs. In the West, we so easily fall into comfort of feeling in control of our lives. Much of what is painful and difficult in life is hidden from our view. We have so many agreed-upon conventions about how and what we can expect of each other and of society in general. In India, this does not hold true. There, chaos is the natural order of things.

Within that chaos, it is possible to see much more clearly all facets of human life.

In this article, I'd like to describe several situations that illustrate how India can be such a deep teaching for me. As is usually the case, my first lesson came almost immediately after my arrival in the country. To be gentle to myself this time, I made plans to stay with friends in Delhi. Because I was arriving in the middle of the night as flights almost always do in Delhi, I planned to take a taxi. It was clear about which pre-paid taxi stand to use as most of them result in demands for extra money upon arrival at the destination. I asked for a driver who was familiar with the area of the city to which I was going. I asked him in broken English if he knew where it was that I needed to go. Of course, he did! We weren't five minutes into our journey before he began to stop and ask for directions to where I was going. This was the beginning of what was to be a two-hour taxi ride around Delhi in the middle of the night. As soon as I realized that he had no idea of where he was going, I could feel myself beginning to feel reactive. Thinking that I really could control the situation, I had been careful with my planning so that everything would go smoothly. It was so obvious in those hours that I had no control. Then I remembered the gift of being in India and having the rug pulled out from beneath my expectations. In the next moment, I realized that I would likely arrive there at some point and that, if I could just let go of my

## VIPASSANA EVENTS

### THE SASKATCHEWAN SCENE, 2003

November 7 to 11

"*Happiness*," a Residential Retreat with **Howard Cohn** at Wood Acres Retreat Centre, Moose Jaw; \$240 retreat fee and *dana*; contact Chris Gilboy (306) 522-0616

### THE SASKATCHEWAN SCENE, 2004

January 12 to

February 16

"*Insight Meditation One*," a Six-Week Course with **Dana White**; Mondays (7:15 to 9:15 p.m.) at 2672 Robinson Street, Regina; \$25.00 class fee and *dana*

February 13 to 15

Non-residential Retreat with **Joanne Broatch** at Sherwood Forest Country Club, Regina

February 17

Public Talk and Meditation Evening, **Joanne Broatch**, at 2672 Robinson Street, Regina (7:30 to 9:30 p.m.)

February 20 to 22

Retreat with **Joanne Broatch**, Saskatoon; contact Doris Larsen (306) 242-5004

May 4 to June 15

"*Insight Meditation Two*," a Six-Week Course for those who have completed "*Insight Meditation One*," with **Dana White**; Tuesdays (7:15 to 9:15 p.m.) at 2672 Robinson Street, Regina; \$25.00 class fee and *dana*

May 15 to 23

Residential Retreat with **Sharda Rogell** at Wood Acres Retreat Centre, Moose Jaw

September 18 and 19

Non-Residential Meditation Weekend with **Sharda Rogell** at Seniors' Education Centre, Regina

September to October  
(dates to be announced)

"*Insight Meditation One*," a Six-Week Course with **Dana White**; 7:15 to 9:15 p.m.; at 2672 Robinson Street, Regina; \$25.00 class fee and *dana*

October  
(date to be announced)

Day of Mindfulness with **Dana White** at Seniors' Education Centre, Regina; \$10.00 registration fee for anyone not on the September to October six-week course

November 10 to 14

"*Living Freedom*," a Residential Retreat with **Mark Coleman** at Wood Acres Retreat Centre, Moose Jaw



### About Our Teachers



**Sharda Rogell** is the guiding teacher for the Regina Insight Meditation Community. She started practising in the Theravadin Buddhist tradition in 1979 and teaching worldwide in 1985. She brings a strong emphasis to awakening heartfulness. Sharda has also been influenced by the non-dual teachings of Advaita, as well as Dzogchen in the Tibetan tradition. She presently teaches at the Insight Meditation Society in Massachusetts, and Spirit Rock Meditation Center in California.



**Joanne Broatch** has been practising Vipassana in the Theravadin tradition since 1980, and teaching since 1994. Her primary guide as a practitioner and as a teacher is Jack Kornfield and she has practised extensively with senior teachers at I.M.S. and Spirit Rock. She is influenced by Diamond Heart work, the Painting Experience, and her own years as a teacher, business consultant, writer and editor. She teaches retreats in Canada and the U.S., and has classes and sitting groups in Vancouver.



**Howard Cohn** has practised meditation since 1972. He has lead Vipassana retreats since 1985 and leads ongoing classes in San Francisco and Sausalito. He has studied with many Asian and western teachers of several traditions, including Theravada, Zen, Dzogchen and Advaita Vedanta. He has been strongly influenced by contact with the Indian master H.W.L. Poonja. He has done postgraduate work in East/West Psychology and has a private counseling practice.



**Mark Coleman** has been engaged in Buddhist practice since 1984, primarily within the Insight Meditation (Vipassana) tradition. He has also been influenced by the Advaita teachings of H.W.L. Poonja in India and by his studies with Dzogchen teachers in both Asia and the West. Since 1997, Mark has been teaching meditation retreats in the UK, USA and India. He has a Masters degree in psychotherapy and currently teaches meditation in San Francisco.



**Dana White** has been practising Insight Meditation since 1988, attending retreats in Canada, United States, England and India. In 2000, she began teacher training under the guidance of Sharda Rogell. For the past ten years, Dana has been the guiding member of the Regina Insight Meditation Community.

**Retreats:** require pre-registration. If you are on our regular mailing list (please contact us if you wish to be placed on it), details of residential retreats will be mailed two to three months before the event. *Please ask retreat contact persons about scholarships* if your financial situation deters you from attending.

**Meditation Evenings and Public Talks:** Please look for posters at traditional locations announcing public talks by visiting teachers when they are in Regina or Saskatoon.

**Introductory Meditation Courses:** made up of six classes that generally run from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. and a day of mindfulness; require pre-registration; dates may change – please contact us for up-to-date information.

**Weekly Sitting Group: Regina** Wednesdays throughout the year, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.; 2672 Robinson Street; Dana White will lead whenever possible; 45-minute sitting, 45-minute discussion.

**Weekly Sitting Group: Saskatoon** Sundays throughout the year, 7:45 to 9:00 p.m.; Yoga Central, 211B – 3521 8th Street, Eastwood Centre; 30-minute discussion, 45-minute sitting.

*ALL EVENTS are fragrance free – please avoid wearing perfumes, perfumed skin-care products, clothing washed in fragranced detergents, or anything else which can cause distress to those who are chemically sensitive.*

**Contacts for Regina Insight Meditation Community information:** Maureen (306-352-1750) or Chris (306-522-0616).

**Contact for Saskatoon events:** Doris (306-242-5004).

## THE CALGARY SCENE, 2003 AND 2004

**Sitting Groups:** *Calgary Vipassana Meditation and Study Group*, meets 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays to sit and to study Buddhism; contact Barbara Ross, (403) 243-9697

*Calgary Theravadin Meditation Society*, meets 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.; open to all meditators with experience in Vipassana meditation; contact Anne Mahoney (403) 270-8450;

*Metta Study Group*, meets 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.; contact Anne Mahoney (403) 270-8450;

*Community of Mindful Living, Bow Valley Sangha, Canmore*, meets every Tuesday, 8:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.; occasional days of mindfulness and non-residential retreats; visitors and beginners welcome; contact Mary Dumka (403) 678-2034

## THE WINNIPEG SCENE, 2003 AND 2004

**Sitting Groups:** *Winnipeg Vipassana Meditation Group*, meets Sundays at 9:30 a.m. at Yoga North, 109 Pulford Street (basement of Augustine Church) for sitting (about 30 minutes) and discussion (30 to 45 minutes); contact Nelle Oosterom (204) 453-3637

### The Practice of *Dana*

In the spirit of the 2500 year-old tradition of the Buddha's teachings being priceless and freely offered to everyone who wishes to hear them, our programs are open to all, regardless of their ability to pay. Registration fees for retreats and classes cover administrative costs only.

*Dana* is the Pali term for “spontaneous generosity of the heart.” Everyone wishing to express appreciation for hearing the teachings can voluntarily offer donations for the support of the teachers at retreats, public talks, sittings or any other occasion.

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plan, I could regard this whole experience as an adventure. It was definitely an exercise in patience as we got endless directions, but the driver could not follow them beyond the first instruction. We arrived at the house at 4 a.m., and the driver obviously felt very justified in his request for “*baksheesh*” (a tip) as we had been driving for two hours! For my trip, this taxi-ride was a perfect first lesson about how uncontrollable things are. If I can just surrender or hold lightly my ideas and wishes about what I want, and have some humour about what actually happens, then there really is no problem. In fact, this journey reminded me of the joy of the lightness that I often feel in India when I’m able simply to let things unfold in whatever way they do.

In India, I am constantly challenged by my ideas about how things should be, about how people should treat me, how respect is shown, how things should be fair, and so on. I am reminded of the evening that Chris and I spent at my favourite guesthouse in the holy city of Varanasi. The room we had was spacious and just what we needed. After a wonderful evening of visiting all my favourite spots in the neighbourhood, we went to sleep. At around three in the morning, there was, all of a sudden, a lot of noise coming from the rooms just down the hall. In India, most hotels have no carpet, so sound carries..... I thought that the people making the noise were just arriving, so would soon settle down. However, the voices and commotion went on and on and on and, in fact, never stopped until we went out later that morning. Of course, all the usual thoughts came to my mind about how inconsiderate they were of everyone else and how they should be quiet. In the morning, I found out that several families had arrived and 43 adults and children were sharing four rooms! When I talked with the guesthouse manager, though he sympathized with my dislike of being kept awake all night, he explained that these families were from South India, had just arrived from a long train trip, and of course were doing what they needed to do. One of the aspects of India that has always struck me is how there is room for everything and everyone. No matter how full the train, there is room for one or two more passengers. Space just expands, and all accommodate themselves in whatever way they can. The problem for me was my expectations and views that these pilgrims should have been quiet. If I had dropped that view, I probably would have had more sleep! Again, I received a powerful teaching of how I hold my ideas and views to be the truth that others hold too. Not so!

I am often reminded in India how I really don’t know what is going with other people, even though I think I do. I am continually struck by the light in people’s eyes. The eyes of even the poorest of persons glow when they meet mine. All the ideas we have here in Canada, a “first-world country,” about our high standard of living, our level of societal development, and our level of satisfaction with our lives, are called into question when in India I witness how very present people are in the simple activities of their lives. For many of us here in Canada, life is more safe and

comfortable than a life lived in India. Given this, it’s so easy to make the assumption our lives are more fulfilled than they would be within the limitations of living in a third-world country. But is this really true? How present are we really for the moments of our lives, for each other?

One morning while managing at the retreat in Bodhgaya, I needed to go and see the local doctor in his clinic as one of the retreatants was quite ill. Having been in the retreat environment for over twenty days, I felt open and tender. I entered the doctor’s new and improved clinic, still very simple by our standards. It now contained a small area with plain wooden beds, so could almost be called a hospital. The doctor would occasionally enter to see a patient – otherwise the family tended patients as best they could. As I stood there, I noticed a large Tibetan family huddled around their father in his eighties who was in diabetic coma. The family was in Bodhgaya, so far away from home, for the Dalai Lama’s teachings. In the other corner was a man shaking with fever. He was sitting on a bench with a blanket wrapped around him. One of the Tibetan women in the clinic kindly surrendered her seat, which was inside and away from the wind, to him. The whole time I was there, he sat in that seat, clearly very ill. A few minutes after I arrived, weeping started from the other side of the wall where the beds were located. A woman’s husband had just died. She was there alone and, to my astonishment, was told to be quiet by the clinic staff. I felt anger arise in me and such a sense of compassion for this woman whom I did not know. As she was all alone, I wondered about the impact of her husband’s death. In India, there is no social service system, and being a woman alone can be very difficult. For some, it can mean a life on the streets. I really found it difficult to be there amidst all of this suffering. I felt that life and death were so much in my face that it was hard to be with the reality of them. Yet it was such a teaching because it was, and is, the truth of things. Sickness and death are so much hidden from us in the West because we have constructed institutions that manage what we don’t want to directly see. We really do forget that we are born, get sick, age and die. This reminder in India again and again tells me not to be complacent about my practice or my life. The Buddha repeatedly points out that, if we invest our happiness in our bodies, we will indeed suffer as these bodies have the nature to grow old, sicken and die. I felt very grateful for the lesson given to me that morning. So often, in India, I see things that are shocking and difficult to take in and I find my heart closes. This particular morning, I was blessed as I had the courage to be present with an open heart.

Coming back from India, I feel deep gratitude for my time there, which, no matter what happens and how it feels, is very rich. I am very appreciative of the life I lead here, which is extremely comfortable compared to lives of many people in this world who live on the edge. I hope that I can turn these blessings that I have into something that contributes to a more peaceful and kind world for everyone.

*Dana White*

## The Retreat Scholarship Fund – A Personal Perspective

I am glad to have this opportunity to express my appreciation for the generosity of the RIMC through the Retreat Scholarship Fund.

In the Spring of 2000, I attended my first-ever Retreat in Saskatoon with Joanne Broatch, having been somewhat bullied into it by a dear friend and skilled therapist here. The first evening of the non-residential retreat came after a shocking visit that afternoon to a medical doctor, and I was in a shambles when I arrived. Working with the metta practice, Joanne led us through that weekend, and brought me out the other side to a place of somewhat recovered calm and restored self-confidence ..... with an incredible thirst for more of this experience. Jill, an old friend from another time, also attended this retreat, and, during the closing circle, announced an upcoming week-long residential retreat with Sharda in May. I immediately knew I wanted to be part of this – but, when I heard the cost of registration, I reluctantly let it go – I was unemployed, sick, and on disability assistance. As we parted, Jill suggested that I not let go of the idea of attending the retreat.

A couple of weeks later, she phoned me to say that the RIMC was doing some fund-raising, and chances were good that I would be able to attend and that I should contribute only what I could afford. I was stunned and overwhelmed: these people didn't even know me!

When I arrived at the retreat, my need for doing my own cooking to adhere to the stringent diet I am on was

smoothly and supportively accommodated, allowing me the dignity of making an in-kind contribution towards my participation. I was welcomed warmly, caringly, by the group, and so the healing benefits of the experience began even before the first sitting.

The ongoing connection with the dharma and this sangha has not only contributed in a major way to my healing journey, but has transformed my being. Since that first magical week at Wood Acres, I have become an ardent student of the dharma, and have developed a consistent practice. I have continued to benefit from the Scholarship program which has not only enabled me to strengthen my practice by attending retreat, but has also strengthened my faith and trust in the abundance of life and in the goodness and compassion of my fellow beings. This trust had been seriously damaged in the time leading up to – and contributed to – a serious health challenge in the late '90s. The generosity and emotional support of my long-standing community in north-central Saskatchewan in my time of need started me on the path to recovery, but the support and presence of the sangha has provided an anchor. And it has also offered an active, living example of two of the basic tenets of the dharma: generosity and loving-kindness. I feel that we in Saskatchewan are so very blessed and fortunate to have opportunity to be part of this dharma community.

*Joys Dancer*

### Scholarship Generosity

When I reflect on the generosity of community members that is expressed in donating to our scholarship fund, I am reminded of teachings and practices that are fundamental to this path – generosity of heart – and that there be no barrier (such as lack of money) to anyone who wishes to hear the teachings.

So – thank you to all of you who have donated to the RIMC Scholarship Fund. This fund makes it possible for us to offer scholarship support to persons wishing to attend day-long, weekend and week-long retreats, as well as to the meditation classes that Dana offers three times a year. It has enabled many people, over the years, to attend retreats and classes when they might otherwise have not been able to do so.

When I remember how precious these teachings are to me, I feel a great deal of gratitude for this tradition of ensuring that there is no impediment to someone's desire to access the teachings – and that I am given the opportunity to express my gratitude through contributing. I invite you, too, to consider donating to the scholarship fund. Donations are accepted at any time of the year and can be sent to:

RIMC Scholarship Fund  
c/o Susan Wiebe  
507 – 1610 College Ave.  
Regina, SK S4P 1B7

*Cherie Westmoreland*

## Sangha Council News

In July, Laura and Kelly Bourassa left Regina, relocating in Ethiopia for the next several years. We will very much miss both Laura and Kelly as they both have contributed so much to the ongoing life of this community. Kelly served on council for several years and has for many years kept the RIMC mailing list. Laura served on council until this July, greeted regularly at the Wednesday Night Group, co-ordinated volunteers, and was often involved in getting various events off the ground. We will very much miss their energy and enthusiasm for this community. We hope that we will be able to stay in touch while they are in Ethiopia. Laura tells us she already has the makings of a sitting group there!

Susan Neden has served the council for several years by taking excellent minutes. This summer she joined as a full council member. We are delighted to have her with us.

We welcome back Susan Wiebe and Cherie Westmoreland, who both have served on council in the past. Susan continues diligently to keep the financial accounts for

RIMC. We are pleased to have both Susan and Cherie's input on the Sangha Council.

We also welcome Bob Corkery and his daughter, Shannon, who have both been in the community for a number of years. We are delighted that they are willing to share in the guiding of this community.

We look forward to having Yvette Young and Linea Noels record our meetings – thank you so much for agreeing to take on this essential task!

Thank you as well to Chris Gilboy, Pat Cavanaugh, and Jill Forrester who continue to serve on Sangha Council and support the community in many ways.

As of Fall 2003, the Sangha Council includes Dana White, Chris Gilboy, Pat Cavanaugh, Jill Forrester, Susan Neden, Susan Wiebe, Cherie Westmoreland, Shannon Corkery and Bob Corkery.

*Dana White*

### A Quotation .....

I'm in the midst of screening a documentary on the life of Helen Luke entitled *A Sense of the Sacred*, and thought I would pass on this quote from her:

“Wisdom consists in doing the next thing that you have to do. Doing it with your whole heart and finding delight in doing it. And the *delight* is the sense of the sacred.”

*Cherie Westmoreland*

### **Regina Insight Meditation Community**

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