

Sangha Update  
October 2007

Hello Sangha Friends,

Welcome to the first ever update from Crestone Mountain Zen Center. It is our goal to keep each of you informed about what is happening at the center.

I'll begin with the end of Practice Period. As always, we were sad to say goodbye to those committed practitioners who took three or more months out of their lives to join our winter Practice Period. The participants this year included Leo von Kreij and Alan Julseth, both of whom came from Germany; Christian Mayhofer, from Austria; and Matt Zeppelin, Brendan Watt, and Gregory Wood, all from the U.S. This practice period was the first for Leo, Alan, Christian, Brendan, and Matt, and their efforts, as well as Gregory's (who was back for his second), made the three months particularly fruitful and satisfying.

In April we hosted the third CMZC Community Luncheon for eighty or so of the people we know best in the Baca and Crestone community. Dan led us in preparing and serving delicious Mexican cuisine (tamarind yellow rice, black beans, chilequiles, pineapple salsa, with custom sorbets for dessert). Many of the guests helped with dishes and clean up, giving the event a truly communal feeling.

The big news in May was the departure of our longest-standing resident monk, Nentatsu Mark Bluestein. After 16 years of residential practice at CMZC, Mark moved in just down the road with his partner and fellow-Zen student Anne Ross. He is now working as a carpenter, and he and Anne come up often for zazen.

During the May work intensive, we painted the staff bathroom in the Main House, painted and carpeted Staff House 2, and carpeted the Studio. We also installed a new sign at the front entrance after a van slipped in the snow this winter and knocked over the old one. Other projects included: planting flowers outside the Dormitory, the Main House, and Hoto An, and of course the spring planting of the vegetable garden. Many thanks to a generous donor who made the carpeting and sign projects possible.

This June we replaced our 25-year-old fire hydrant, which had sprung an underground leak in January and flooded Young

Pine Hut. The cost was a little staggering (backhoe, digging, and other labor costs, plus the new hydrant), especially because it seems that the damage to Young Pine Hut is not reparable. We mourn the loss our little Head Monk's cabin. It has served us well in past practice periods. As soon as possible, we hope to replace it with a well-insulated, environmentally responsible alternative.

Perhaps most important, we continue our preparations and mitigation for the wildfire that is sure to come one day. Dan is leading a project with local contractors to build a heated shed for the fire fighting 'foam trailer, so that we can have it at the ready year-round.

Other news. The latest issue of 'Xen: Dharma und Sangha News' came out in Germany to positive reviews. We should have copies available from Crestone soon. We also switched our long distance carrier in order to lower phone costs. We hired a carpenter to build railings along the west side of the zendo deck. And finally, we began to experiment with a local Community Supported Agriculture program.

The summer guest season was productive and positive, although with a lower income than in recent years. We had our average number of retreats (nine), but the groups were, on the whole, a little smaller. In a way this was a blessing, because in previous years we've had a resident staff of six, and this summer we were down to three.

Many thanks to the 23 participants who made our first sangha seminar at the Briar Rose in Boulder so productive and energetic. The resident staff at CMZC is looking forward to establishing this as a practice tradition in Boulder in years to come.

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Overall, things are going well on the mountain. We are grateful to be living here in the midst of so much beauty, and grateful to study with all of you, with Baker-roshi, and with one another.

Wishing you all well in your practice and your lives.

Seisho Craig Hase  
and the CMZC staff and residents

P.S. It is my hope that we will be able to send this sort of update to you quarterly. However, if you would prefer not to receive these updates, please reply with a message in the subject line that reads: Please take me off the update list.

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