

For Broadcast List & DHARMA CENTRE NEWS

Hello friends and members of the DCC. This update is meant to provide you with an overview of decisions made by the DCC Board, based on our current financial state, with input from and discussions with members.

Reduced Operations at the Meditation Centre

On February 2nd, a special Renewal Meeting of the Dharma Centre of Canada was held in Toronto. A winter snowstorm forced us to cancel an Emergency Member meeting on Friday, February 1st when we had intended to conduct a vote regarding the proposed reduction of operations of the centre. That cancellation meant we were not able to conduct the vote on Feb. 2nd as our bylaws state that members must be notified seven days in advance of Membership Meetings. As a vote is not essential, we are proceeding with the decision to significantly reduce operations, based on the consensus reached among those who attended the meeting and those of you who have written to the Board over the past few weeks.

This is what Reduced operations means:

From April onward, only courses attended by a minimum of ten full-time people will proceed. With some exceptions, the property will not be used for programs until August but can be made available for individuals wanting to do private retreats. (An interim policy clarifying centre usage is being drafted).

- * Courses that do run will be responsible to link with a designated Board member and might have to provide administration, cooking / shopping, and property care (garbage removal, etc.). In some cases, a team of volunteer staff could be obtained].
- * Staff were laid off as of February 29th, however the centre's Resident Teachers, Terry and Mala, will be staying on property through to May 11th.
- * The course "Weaving the Elements" with Cecilie Kwiat, Terry & Mala, has received enough support and registrations to ensure it will be held on property between March 21st and April 10th. Course attendees and teachers will ensure operations are maintained.
- * The centre's car will be sold.
- * Electricity at Hill House is minimal to prevent pipes bursting, the Hermitage, Temple, and Tara Cabin have been shut off. The Bath-House has been modified so it is running on a minimal but safe amount of heating.
- * After the "Weaving the Elements" course is over in April, a volunteer will be on property once a day to ensure basic property functions are maintained, and to keep an eye on all buildings.
- * We are seeking stable and reliable volunteers to help with caretaking duties on property; possibly to combine personal retreat work with light on-property responsibilities.
- * We are also seeking volunteers to help Board members with administration and other tasks .

Toronto Renewal Meeting & Work Groups

Close to 30 people attended the February 2nd meeting. At this meeting the Board advised the membership of the current state of our finances and provided information on the overall state of the meditation centre. It was agreed that a period of reduced operations was required, beginning in mid February.

Brian McLeod joined us as facilitator for the second half of the meeting, which was the first Renewal session with the membership. From this session four new work groups - that would work closely with existing committees and the Board of Directors - were struck:

Renewal Project - Tracy Sheridan (coordinator), sherlap@sympatico.ca; Kim Sawyer, Pam Hyatt, David Kehler, Shelane Donoghue. This group will establish procedures, form, and forums for members across communities in Ontario, and will meet to identify and engage membership in the Renewal of the DCC.

Renewal Work Group: We need the following: Focus group space that will accommodate 7-8 people for a 3 hour evening session or weekend; focus group participants, (all members, friends and neighbours will be welcomed!). We are searching for scribes and facilitators. We will need locations across Toronto, Peterborough, Ottawa, Kinmount York Region and perhaps Mississauga. If you are able to donate your living room for this purpose, Please call Tracy at sherlap@sympatico.ca 416 534-5726

Fundraising - Darrell Piekarz (coordinator), darrell.piekarz@ec.gc.ca; Karen Meredith, Susan Cowan, Deborah Pearson, Caryl Peterson, Shelley Buttior. The short-term goal is to meet fixed operation costs over the 12-month period from March 1, 2008 to February 28, 2009. Long-term goal is to support initiatives through the Renewal process.

Fundraising Committee and Work group: We need your help with phone calls and fundraising initiatives. There are many good ideas circulating that require resources to actualize. Call Trudy Gold tgold@magma.ca 613 226-6371

Marketing and Promotion – Lisa Cowen (coordinator, ; Kim Sawyer, Neils Walkau, Pam Hyatt, Terry Hagan, Mala Sikka. Formed to provide support with communication efforts in fundraising, Renewal activities, and course advertising for 2008 scheduled courses.

Marketing Work Group: We need your help with our marketing work group. If you have graphic, communication and/or promotional skills please call Lisa at 416 578-3018 lisamichellecowen@hotmail.com

Property Management - Terry Hagan (coordinator), thagan@candlelight.ca; Jim Cartan, James Baldry, Bob Hillier. Short-term goal is to coordinate needs of maintaining property safely during reduced operations. Long-term plan is to implement the ideas and direction from the Renewal process.

We need interested members to help with monitoring, repairing and

investigating new ways to manage and steward our land.
Call: Terry Hagan thagan@candlelight.ca 705 488 2607

In addition to our work groups, a Nomination Committee was created at the Feb. 24 Board meeting.

Nomination Committee - Lisa Cowen (coordinator), lisamichellecowan@hotmail.com; with Susan Cowen. In July, the Board will need at least three new Directors - who understand the existing structure and are willing and able to contribute their energy and leadership abilities. This committee is tasked with finding, introducing, and supporting new Board members.

Lastly, we are busily formulating an **Administration Team**. Please note that from March 21st onward, there will be no Administrator based at the DC. We hope to be able to respond to emails and phone messages within 72 hours.

Administration Team: The board is presently looking to assemble an Administration Team to take care of various ongoing communication, registration, and other finance-related admin tasks. If this is an area of interest to you where you believe you can help (without requiring too much training), please contact Trudy at tgold@magma.ca. 613 226-6371

These volunteer work groups will be instrumental in moving the DCC through the next few months of reduced operations on property, and carry on more Renewal meetings in local communities. With the help of the work groups and our standing Committees (Program, Fundraising, and Marketing), we will undertake necessary Renewal activities such as intensive short and long term fund-raising, re-engaging membership, building repairs and other projects.

DCC Property Kinmount

As stated previously, the DCC will continue to support retreats and courses on property, however we will function in a way that will ensure costs are kept down and that we meet our fixed costs. We will update you regularly over the coming months on courses and the availability of the centre for private retreats. We have many details to sort out that will help us to determine what we can offer and what is realistic. We will keep you informed.

Fundraising Drive

As of March 16, the fundraising drive launched to ensure enough money is available to meet minimum requirements on property has gathered:

- * **over \$400** in additional monthly EFT or post-dated cheques, (bringing us to just under \$1,000 per month, still well below our goal of \$2500 per month).
- * **\$700** in new 2008 membership fees
- * **\$2619.97** in general donations

Ontario-based members, friends, and long-time students of Namgyal Rinpoche were phoned in February/March to encourage giving. Along with these phone calls

we received much advice and many ideas about options for the DCC's future. We thank everyone for their gracious input.

A fundraising drive, 'Campaign 108', is being developed. This campaign will focus on encouraging members outside Ontario to continue to contribute.

Volunteers Needed

Many volunteers will be needed in the short and long term, in many different capacities to carry out these activities:

- * conduct a membership drive
- * form a telephone tree
- * work on property including cooking, cleaning, administration work, and outdoor clean-up.
- * schedule, host, and facilitate renewal meetings in Toronto (next meeting - March 29, 2008), Ottawa, & Peterborough.

Next DCC General Membership Meeting

March 29th, Saturday, 9:30am - 1:30pm; 55 John Street, Metro Hall, Room 303, 3rd floor, Toronto. This meeting will bring representatives from all work groups who will report on the activities and progress of their respective groups to date. All are invited to attend, listen, share ideas, and become involved in this exciting new phase of the DCC's life.

AGM Moving to July

This Board will be losing two members at the end of this term, and there is currently one vacancy. The DCC needs three committed, involved, and energetic people to make a commitment of at least two years and up to five years as members of the Board of Directors. These positions need to be filled when we hold our elections at the Annual General Meeting, which has been postponed til July, 2008.

We need everyone's help to navigate this journey. Without your enduring commitment of time, effort, and finances we cannot facilitate the changes that are essential for the Dharma Centre to continue.

Call or email us today to find out more about how you can become involved.

Sincerely,

The 2007-2008 DC Board of Directors:

Lisa Cowen - lisamichellecowen@hotmail.com

Rab Wilkie - rab@peteroboro.net

Tracy Sheridan - sherlap@sympatico.ca

Niels Walkau - walkau@eagle.ca

Trudy Gold - tgold@magma.ca

Maria Burns