



THE SHAMBHALA MEDITATION
CENTER
OF ST. JOHNSBURY

OCTOBER NEWSLETTER 2005

802-748-4240

17 EASTERN AVENUE
(BELOW THE STAR THEATER)
ST. JOHNSBURY, VT 05819
PO Box 66

WWW.STJSHAMBHALA.ORG

MEMBERSHIP

What is the ideal relationship between local practitioners and the Shambhala Center or a Dharma Study Group? How do they relate to Shambhala International? The answer to these questions seems to be essential to the proper formation and function of enlightened society in the vision of Shambhala Buddhism.

The Membership Policy Working Group of Shambhala International has been formed to look into these questions, see how they are being handled at the present, and make recommendations for a universal code of membership so that the sangha will have an effective connection to the path and structures of our Shambhala Society.

This Membership Policy Working Group produced and published their final draft of the Recommendations for a Unified Membership Policy for the Shambhala Mandala in December 2004. Their research showed a wide variation in approaches among Centers and Dharma Study Groups. There was a range of membership criteria from relaxed exclusivity with little requirements to a strict accounting for numerous monitored stipulations bringing to mind "the too tight/too loose" paradigm. By distilling the best intentions of these diverse views of what should constitute the ideal social commitment in our Shambhala Buddhist society, they found a commonality of purpose.

The challenge seems to be to take our ordinary social life as practice and turn that flower outwards. As well as our home practice sessions, our seminars, seminaries, or retreats at the major centers, our sociality could be considered part of our practice in connection to others, showing comparable elements of form and discipline such as we apply in our meditative and study pursuits; seeing our membership in a Center as another aspect of our path.

The Membership Policy Working Group came up with 23 recommendations for Center membership.

Based on these, our St. Johnsbury Shambhala Center has adopted a 6 point criteria policy for Membership as follows:

MEMBERSHIP DEFINITION:

A member is one who makes a connection to mindfulness-awareness practice, and/or contemplative practices based on mindfulness-awareness, and is interested in deepening their experience by integrating this into daily life. Based on this connection, members are empowered to serve the community by supporting its activities financially and by taking on appropriate responsibilities.

CRITERIA:

1. Members will maintain a regular meditation practice and contacts with a meditation instructor.
2. Members will attempt to fill at least one of the regular scheduled shrine room rota positions or cleaning slots each month.
3. Members will make regular monthly dues payments. Automatic monthly withdrawal is the preferred method but checks or cash is also acceptable. Although \$25 per person is the suggested amount, more or less, as one feels to be affordable, is equally good.
4. Members will be expected to volunteer some amount of their time towards Center projects whenever possible if they are so requested.
5. Members should feel free to call on their fellow members for personal assistance of any kind and be ready to respond as they can to such requests.
6. Members are adjured to always rely on a cheerful state of mind.

In acknowledgment of their level of commitment to the Center, members are invited to attend meetings of the Executive Committee and to submit agenda topics.

They will regularly receive copies of the previous meeting's minutes and the proposed, coming agenda along with the monthly events calendar. They are encouraged to offer to fill vacant posts on the Executive Committee. Members have the exclusive right to wear the Center's emblem in the form of a lapel pin and receive keys to the Center for unlimited access.

It is understood that many of those connected to the Center will not care to commit to the degree of involvement inherent in membership but will still want to continue to take part in various programs, practice periods, and social events. This is entirely welcomed and they will be considered "Friends" of the Center and they shall make whatever contributions to the Center's staffing, maintenance, finances and social life that they can. They will receive a copy of the current month's events calendar and are welcome to attend the Executive Committee monthly meetings.

We will have an oath taking ceremony and presentation of the Center's membership pin at the next community meeting. If you wish to become a member at that time, you must fill in the attached application. You may return it by email or post a copy to:

St. Johnsbury Shambhala Center
Membership
P.O. Box 66 St. Johnsbury VT 05819

PRACTICE NOTES:

Supplication to the Shambhala Lineage

Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche has written a new Supplication to the Shambhala Lineage. This new liturgy acknowledges our rich heritage of the Kagyu, Nyingma, and Shambhala traditions. We will be including this chant in our morning practice sessions as soon as it becomes available. If anyone is interested in helping insert this in the chant books, please call Catherine.

Shrine Room Positions

Thank you to everyone who has been signing up for shrine room shifts! Your support for the community's practice environment is essential.

Nyinthun Schedule

Our full day nyinthun resumes this fall on Sunday October 2nd with sitting from 9am - noon and 1:00 - 4:00pm. Nyinthuns are an opportunity to deepen our connection to practice and community and are offered the first Sunday of every month.

Meditation Instruction

All shamatha students are strongly encouraged to meet with a Meditation Instructor on a regular and ongoing basis. This relationship provides an opportunity for dialogue and serves to assist students in their understanding of practice. If you do not currently have a regular Meditation Instructor, please contact Catherine Clark, ceclark@sover.net or 592 3102.

A special thanks to Alan Boye, our shrine keeper, for his ongoing and generous support to the community in keeping the shrines sparkling!

If you'd like to receive instruction for the roles of gatekeeper, drummer or umdze, please contact Catherine Clark, ceclark@sover.net or 592 3102. A training session for these positions will be offered soon to people who would like to stretch their practice to include these opportunities to be of service to the community.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

Meeting on the second Tuesday of every month at the Center. All are welcome to attend!

- Directors: open ·
- Practice: Catherine Clark ·
- Finance: Vickie Schafer ·
- Facilities: Michael Taney ·
- Education: open ·
- Secretary: Linda Warner ·
- Rusung: Michael Taney ·
- Dekyong: Merle Thompson ·
- Hospitality: Ken Campos ·
- Publicity: open ·
- Membership: David Wilde ·
- Shambhala Training: open

□ Service Personnel:

- Librarian: Michael Beauregard ·
- Shrine Keepers: Alan Boye & Julie Swan ·
- Recycling: Sandy Raynor ·
- Decor Supervisor: Suellyn Wittington ·
- Communications: David Wilde

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes September 13, 2005

Present:

Ken Campos - Hospitality
Caroline DeMaio - Education
Merle Thompson - Dekyong
Vickie Shafer - Finance
Michael Taney - Rusung
David Wilde - Membership

- Accepted a proposal to have a collection box at the Center for tooth brushes for an oral hygiene program in South America.
- Lillian Concordia offered to teach a program on Lojong, the Bodhicaryavatara sutra and Madhyamaka avatara.

- Caroline DeMaio is stepping down from the Education Department post due to other commitments.
- Planning a Miksang slide show of Dharma Art photography. Recommend to show "Discovering Elegance"
- Susanne Duquette will not be teaching here this fall.
- Communications now considered a Service position, not an EC post.
- Likely no garage sale this year. Suggest a fund raising letter instead.
- Membership criteria and presentation approved.
- Catherine Clark and Merle Thompson will arrange to take part in a conference call with local Centers.

Proposed agenda for October 11:

- Report from Practice
- Report from the Rental Policy Subcommittee
- Report on Membership activities

