

Life is full of comings and goings; what is important is how well you arrive at your destination. anonymous.

Gitche M'Qua Newsletter



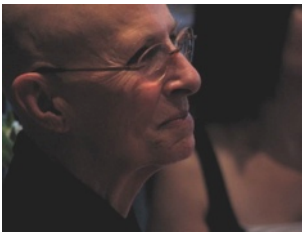
It is the land that heals us, prayers that fuel us and peace that guides us.

August 2007 Volume II

Late Summer Greetings Dear Friends

Hopefully you have found some summer, quiet time to be nourished by nature. This newsletter will catch you up on our progress, our latest offerings, including **Ven. Dhyani Ywahoo's** return visit scheduled for **Nov 16-18**, **Roshi Joan's** return to teach to health professionals in the hospitals and a new course exploring "enlightened business" practices with board member, Steve Vaccaro.

Roshi Reminds us to Face our Suffering



In both her June talk and retreat Joan Halifax Roshi plumbed the depths of our suffering to reveal the Buddha's teachings as medicine. The truth of suffering is one the Buddha's Four Enobling

Truths, that Roshi exemplified through the life of King Ashoka, who went from cruel to enlightened leader. Roshi skillfully reminded us that our delusions must be transformed, and that otherwise our suffering becomes narcissistic and an obstacle on the path of service. Bearing witness to our suffering and others is a practice of bringing heart and breath to the bear bones of the present moment, and, like facing death, bringing awareness to our 'not knowing'.

Roshi will return in October to give a series of talks through Gitche M'Qua's Being With Our Dying program at Sunnybrook Hospital and University Health Network for the Critical Care, Palliative Care, and Spiritual/Religious teams, This is very exciting!!

Diane Longboat To Bless Land Near Owen Sound, Sept. 8th

Over the next 6 weeks we are preparing for a ceremonial gathering with Mohawk teacher, Diane Longboat. **On Saturday, September 8th please plan to join us.** See for yourself why this gentle land holds such a special



place in our hearts. The intention of this day is for you to meet the land & beings living there, and join in prayer at a fire ceremony. Angie and I believe this retreat land will become a place for many who seek retreat, refuge and healing. Children are very welcome!! Click below to let us know you are attending.

www.gitchemqua.org/blessing.htm

As we prepare for the 2007/2008 programming cycle, we continue to gather clarity of direction. As most of you know, our development has grown through our devotion to the vision of Gitche M'Qua.

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This commitment continues, but we need to step back more to allow you, our community, to join us. As each one of you offers your gift of time, energy, and financial support, our Centre grows. One example is the leadership that Kanae Kinoshita, a



dear friend and Buddhist chaplain, has offered in helping to bring Roshi Joan into the hospital; another is the work that board member Stuart Sackman and his wife Jill have offered in establishing the Alido Di Iorio Golf Tournament scheduled for late spring of 2008.

Developing sustainability has been a challenge for us. This requires new skills and involvement from you. What we want to create is a structure that is stable. Last year many of you became Founding Members by contributing \$25 or more. This year we invite you to become a Sustaining Member. This means you sustain the organization and support its growth through monthly or annual contributions. To progress as an organization we need to create an operating budget that allows growth, rather than survival. Your membership demonstrates to foundations and granting agencies our capacity to serve. Look at the options best for you, including our preference which is monthly contributions.

Please with our gratitude, renew your membership today.

www.gitchemqua.org/membership.htm



FALL WORKSHOPS & EVENTS

SAT SEPT 8:

LAND BLESSING CEREMONY with Diane Longboat & Friends of Gitche M'Qua, Owen Sound. 11-4pm

On land we steward near Owen Sound, Diane & friends from our community will guide us into prayer, fire ceremony, and communion by walking the land. Potluck lunch & celebrating.

OCT 14-16

MEN MAKING MEANING RETREAT Owen Sound, with Andrew Blake

In this weekend retreat for men, we will explore the inner recesses of our hearts to make meaning in our lives and in becoming peacemakers for the world.

OCT 27

IN THE PRESENCE OF OUR ANCESTORS with Diane Longboat, Toronto. 10-4pm

The Ancestors connect us to who we are and link us to our roots as human beings. Diane Longboat guides us into honouring, remembering, communicating and receiving guidance from those who have travelled before us.

NOV 1

CELEBRATING OUR ANCESTORS: Friends of Gitche M'Qua, 7pm

Each year we gather to share an evening of ritual, drumming, storytelling, grieving, and multicultural feasting in honour of our ancestors. Like the Mayans and other cultures, we make peace and remember to honour all our relations.

NOV 16-18

VEN. DHYANI YWAHOO: Watch for Retreat & lecture details to follow soon!

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FALL COURSES & CLASSES

MUTUAL ABUNDANCE:

**with Steve Vaccaro, Business Coach,
10-Weeks, Wednesdays starting Oct 3**

Drawn from the principles of “Enlightened Business” & the Buddha’s teachings, this weekly course connects our hearts to our work, and our vision to serving others.

COMMUNITY QI GONG PRACTICE:

At 11am on Wednesday’s since 1999, we have practiced **Sheng Zhen Qi Gong**, which are moving meditation practices developed by Master Li. These movements are easy to learn, powerful to practice as a group and provide a rich context for healing, silence, and prayer. Please join us.

COMMUNITY MEDITATION:

Still underdevelopment, watch for our Thursday evening (7:30-9pm) community practice night. Each evening will begin with 1 hour of silent sitting practice, followed by short dharma talks. By donation.

For details or registration:

www.gitchemqua.org/events.htm



PATH OF SERVICE

A large part of our work is the path of service and making a difference through volunteering as a community. By offering ourselves we learn to practice and embody wisdom and compassion. Gitche M’Qua is primarily a service organization striving to provide a context for meaningful community practice, education, and volunteer projects like our work in Healing & End-of-Life Care.

Currently we are in need of the following support.

Grant Writing: We are searching for skilled grant writers for several projects we are looking to fund. If possible this would be a part volunteer and paid position. Please inquire today!

Library: Books for our library on healing, spirituality, etc are welcome. Over the years we have been building a library, many of which have been donated. Someone with library skills would be wonderful in helping us to categorize the books and to create a lending format.

Event Volunteers: Behind the scenes are tireless hours of serving to make any event happen. Volunteers are needed for every event and program listed in this newsletter. If you wish to help, let Sherry our office administrator know today where you wish to help.

link: www.gitchemqua.org/volunteer

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BEING WITH OUR DYING

With growing community support our Being With Our Dying program continues to be guided by vision, scaled to our capacity and practiced with joy as we deepen our relationship to healing and dying. The ever expanding team of Kanae Kinoshita, Andrea Warnick, Lysa Toyne, Pauline Abrahams, Shari Geller, with Angie and Andrew are focussing on 3 main areas:

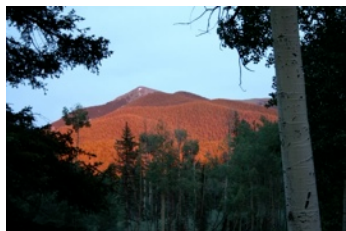
Education such as the program at Sunnybrook & UHA that Kanae spearheaded to bring Roshi to teach to health professionals, as well as an annual day-long, *Contemplating Our Death*, where we each look at how we wish to die. This will be held early in 2008.

Counselling & Support in healing and in dying will continue as part of our path of service. While still in the early stage of development, we are investigating core funding to develop this service. While we are currently offering services in a small capacity, grant writers are needed for this to expand.

Community Development is a strong value at the centre, so we are actively expanding the human resources for our Being With Dying program. Over the years so many skillful and committed friends have attended our programs, in the next cycle we look to the means to bring a volunteer community together. This would be give rise to another grant proposal for funding.

A little update from Angie & Andrew

Prayer and the Wilderness

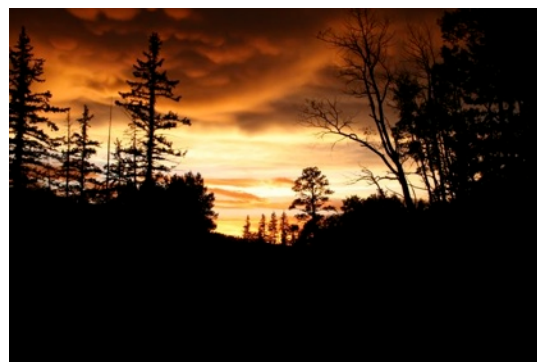


At summer solstice Angie and I attended a Wilderness Fast with Roshi Joan Halifax. This was her first program on new retreat land called Prajna Mountain in the

Sangre de Cristo Mountain range in Northern New

Mexico. Here in the wilderness of mountains, sky, and wildness, my heart quietened more than ever. Seeing land, trees, mountains and sky in their naturalness inspired me. It reminded me of the state referred in Buddhist meditation practice as the “natural state.” When we are natural, we are uncontrived; without confusion or trying to be something, we are naturally awake. In the elements at 9500’ I witnessed the natural world and inner world colluding to bring new visions. Angie was one of the “base-camp girls” holding the space of prayer for those on the 4-day fast.

We have returned deeply inspired to develop our retreat land near Owen Sound, where there is the potential for relationship to the land, all the beings big and small, and the elements themselves.



As we complete this newsletter, we enter into retreat on the land, then for a 5-day Tibetan Buddhist retreat with Ven. Dhyani Ywahoo, and back to the land to prepare grounds for the Land Blessing Ceremony. Between city life and country we find the balance to serve and to reflect that maintains a balance heart and body.

In Service & Gratitude,

Angie & Andrew, Cofounders

P.S. Thanks to Kate W. and Angie for all the pics. Be patient as we finish updating the website.

Contact us directly: 416-651-1846