

# ROOT & BRANCH

Newsletter of the Original Root Zen Center  
October 2009



## A Bodhisattva Culture, 2<sup>nd</sup> point: Re-awakening practices that honor the 3<sup>rd</sup> Jewel. *By Mathew Somlai*

... throughout the collections of texts that have come down to us as authorized “Word of the Buddha,” we do not find a single *sutta*, a single discourse, in which the Buddha has drawn together all the elements of his teaching and assigned them to their appropriate place within some comprehensive system.

While in a literate culture in which systematic thought is highly prized the lack of such a text with a unifying function might be viewed as a defect, in an entirely oral culture – as was the culture in which the Buddha lived and moved – the lack of a descriptive key to the Dhamma would hardly be considered significant. Within this culture neither teacher nor student aimed at conceptual completeness.

Bhikkhu Bodhi, *In the Buddha's Words*

*Park towards the back and that way you can walk through the garden before going inside. The day lilies have finished blooming for now. To your right used to be grass, and then a wedding garden that MT Linda created for my wedding. Now it's an herb and edible garden. To your left also used to be grass, and then MT Tony said, “Here,” and a Buddha appeared and then plants and then three beds and then nothing and then a brick labyrinth and then nothing and then wood chips and now flat sandstones marking a quarter of a spiral path.*

I believe that the search for comprehensiveness, the need for validation, the hold that lineage has over our practice, and the manner in which the 3<sup>rd</sup> Jewel has been distanced from practice are all intertwined. Bhikkhu Bodhi points to a marvelous teaching in that our very literacy, in many ways, has accelerated a search for unification, for having it all in one place, stamped by one person after another to show that this is the true teaching.

*Go inside. We have only had this downstairs for about a year now. Many of the members here had a hand in creating the wall mural. Each brush stroke, many hands. Children of Zen Center members made the hand and feet prints.*

*Back here is the peace pantry. A need arose and we are trying to meet it. Feel free to take and donate as you wish.*

*This is the ancestor room. My uncle's ashes rest here now. I knew half the people in here when their bodies were breathing. Now I believe I know them all quite well. I look here often. I wonder where my ashes will rest and for how long.*

How then do we go about creating Sangha in a literate world without seeking a penultimate model of community interdependence? Can we return to this ‘oral’ version of community and

*Continued on page 2*

## Finding Peace in a Time of Chaos and Uncertainty: Intensive Peace Retreat Workshop

Master Teachers Linda and Tony Somlai will lead a **one-day workshop on Saturday, Oct. 24 from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.** at the Original Root Zen Center in Racine, Wisconsin. The workshop will cost \$75 and includes lunch, break treats, a copy of Tony Somlai's book, *Peace Vigil* and learning materials. Here is a description of the class:

Peace is not a big idea. Peace is like a small pebble dropped into a suffering pond; the waves will touch all beings. This Peace Retreat Workshop is intended to provide participants with concrete skills they can use in their everyday lives to help themselves and others. The key elements of the retreat are broadly based on basic Buddhist principles of non-violence, peaceful coexistence, and loving-kindness. What makes the workshop unique is that the theory and skills are based on action and active ways of responding to the problems we are facing today.

ORZC is located on the historic DeKoven Center campus, 600 21st St. in Racine, on Lake Michigan. Overnight accommodations are available. Single rooms are \$55 per night; double rooms are \$60.

If you are interested in class, please contact Dustin Block at: [dustin.block@gmail.com](mailto:dustin.block@gmail.com) or (262) 488-3419.

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culture without co-opting this version as some utopia? How does honoring the 3<sup>rd</sup> Jewel become our practice, such that the very humanness we bring is the completeness? Is it even possible to say 'this is the model' in regards Sangha when we don't do that with the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Jewels? How can we create, maintain, and continue a community that thrives in its own fleetingness?

*We had to add this sink in the kitchen. The old one, installed when the Montessori school was here, came up to your knees. Tough to wash dishes. We had no kitchen before this. Everyone brought food from home, or made it at the MT's apartment, and then we washed dishes in the bathroom sink.*

*The quilt you see as we go upstairs, as well as the faces and spirit dolls and prayer flags and multitude of other creative projects, are from 15 years of Women's Retreat. We had been told for years that we were not allowed to have a Women's Retreat. Finally, we decided that no one allows us anything. This is the result. Things change.*

Simon Ortiz, William Bevis, and other Native American scholars have used the example of Navajo sand painting to explain how a culture influenced by oral storytelling differs from one based on writing. This metaphor first arose through Leslie Marmon Silko's use of the sand painting ceremony in her own book *Ceremony*. The book is truly a must read. In regards sand painting itself, check out Wikipedia (yes, its somewhat right on this one) or [www.anthro4n6.net/navajosandpainting](http://www.anthro4n6.net/navajosandpainting) or the best would be to go to [navajopeople.org/navajo-sand-painting.htm](http://navajopeople.org/navajo-sand-painting.htm).

*The mosaic pots and prayer flags you see on the altar are from the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Camp Bodhi Root. This is our day camp for children. We held our first movie night during this year's camp. Horton Hears a Who. Kids watched from inside the fort they built in the middle of the Dharma Room with meditation cushions and chairs and sheets.*

No single leader knows all the images used in sand painting. According to the sites and authors mentioned above there are several different groupings of images and songs, each containing hundreds. As the Navajo People site states, the healer performing the ceremony will choose which images and songs best fit the illness of the individual for whom the ceremony is being performed. But, as Wikipedia states, a healer can only master one or two of these groupings in a lifetime. And, as the Anthro. site states, no one master will teach the entire grouping to any one person. So those seeking to learn to perform the ceremony must seek out many masters. Moreover, these masters must know each other's work and masteries so that an ill person or student may be sent elsewhere if necessary. The ceremony lasts several days, and seeks to realign the ill person with their lives in the everyday, the mythic, and the spiritual. The sand draws out the illness. It is not to be taken lightly. This is the difference between lineage and tradition.

*The targets on the window are for Nerf gun practice. We had*

*a Nerf or be Nerfed assassin competition. Peaceful non-violence at the end of a Nerf. We have a golf club on Sundays. We have a Baggo league on Friday nights. Zen cooking classes. Creative Asylum. Compassion Fest. Classes on peaceful action, creative intention, gardening, writing, music. Renaissance of Rummage is headed up by our Elder Teacher Sue. Breakfasts in the Garden.*

Vine Deloria was (still is) a pre-eminent scholar to read on variances between oral and written cultures, as well as spiritual practices based on space vs. time. Perhaps most important in his delineations is the point that these are not mutually exclusive, nor should we make an 'oral tribal' tradition into a 'thing' – some new completeness to steal as a unified tradition that will be routinized and nailed down for conceptual legitimacy. That said, here are some of his delineations from *God is Red*: a temporal based spirituality seeks a beginning and end of time, such that behavior answers to an abstract ethical system of good and bad, and preaching is the core of religious practice. Getting it right and recording the right answers becomes very important. For spiritualities based on space, communal involvement is of utmost behavioral importance, preaching is given up, and ethics are pragmatic, related to the situation and context. The story must change.

*Many have come here and said they feel at home and peaceful. Many have left saying they felt nothing. This is neither good nor bad. I do not believe this place is utopian, The answer, the path all must take, a thing, an endpoint, nor a new lineage. I would not kill something I so love by nailing it down to 'this is it'.*

Bhikku Bodhi discusses the Sutras much as many American Indian scholars have discussed how oral traditions have incorporated the written without becoming linear and conceptually focused. It is important in these traditions to attack the process of creating latticework in one's mind, and thereby these traditions do not attempt to create latticework themselves. Bodhi focuses on themes, but attempts to do so through the themes associated with everyday life. There is a beautiful passage where the Buddha meets a man completing a morning ritual of honoring the 6 directions. The Buddha quietly, and seemingly improvisationally, helps the man modify the ritual into honoring the 6 types of relationships that exist in all lives. The Buddha continues, according to Bodhi's translation, by providing the 5 behaviors that should be meditated upon for each relationship as it is honored (definitely read Bodhi's translation for a much better discussion, p. 116). The ritual continued on, and others picked it up. Some wrote it down years later to help others, to point to the ever-changing nature of ritual and life and the Buddha's usage of this fleeting nature. Reading kong-ans with this organic, alive, changing, oral in the written intention often leads to a very different 'conception' of the kong-an.

*There is a completeness in Sangha that cannot, should not, be conceived. To do so is incorrect practice. What then can be done?*

# PEACEFUL GRACEFUL AND KIND

*By Anton Somlai*

What if nothing were wrong? It would be interesting to see how your life would unfold with the belief that this moment was enough and did not need anything else. Of course, there is nothing else you can add to this moment. It is already complete. Usually, what we add is in the next moment when we express dissatisfaction with the previous moment. And there we are, creating the never ending suffering of never being satisfied. Rather than cleaning the messy house we bemoan the idea of being overwhelmed. In our confusion, we search for a quiet place never realizing that it is within us. We wonder who will come to save us and never clearly see that we created the problem and are the only one who will help guide us out of the darkness. How would you lead your life if nothing was wrong?

Let's try the following and see if it is of any help. When the dishes are dirty, wash them, dry them, and put them away. The correct relationship with dishes is a very simple, and yet profoundly sacred, job. The plate has the honor of presenting the remains of beings so that your life may continue. Your relationship with the dish is to help it in preparation for the next meal. The harmony you develop with your dishware will help you realize the pleasing synchronicity with your surroundings. Finding this harmonious relationship is **PEACEFUL**.

There is an elegant way to connect with this life. It can be done with ease and without any hesitation. Without holding, attachment, or wanting, any situation is an opportunity to bring compassion into existence. Do this without any effort and you are **GRACEFUL**.

The Buddha never gave a reason as to why things are the way they are. He simply saw cause and effect for what it is. Never having to make a problem, never bringing harm, never creating suffering, comes from the root of love and being **KIND**.

Respond to your surroundings clearly and there is **PEACE**. Do so without any hesitation and there is **GRACE**. Extinguish all causes for suffering and you are **KIND**.

Try this simple mantra for the next 30 days and see if you can gracefully practice peace to bring kindness to others. Let us know how it works for you.

PEACEFUL  
GRACEFUL  
AND KIND

There is an  
elegant way  
to connect with  
this life.

# The Gift *By Sue Jaimes*

Jesus\* came into my life quite by accident. I was trying to catch the crook by the same name who promised me landscaping but instead took my money (and that of several of my lady friends) and then disappeared into thin air. Later, I saw an ad in the paper that read “**Jesus’ Lawn Care.**” Ah Ha!!! Now I can nail that culprit who had his phone conveniently disconnected and refused registered letters. I would now make him pay for ripping us off!

When I called the number I got a soft-spoken Hispanic man with quite an accent. Darn! Not the Jesus I was looking for. But he sounded so sincere on the phone I couldn’t tell him that I was just playing amateur detective. After all, my friends and I were taken for almost \$5,000. And the District Attorney had informed us in no uncertain terms that this was indeed a “fact of life.” You can’t get blood from a turnip. Not wanting to hurt this new Jesus’ feelings, I invited him to come to my house and give me an estimate on the terrible damage that the devious Jesus had so callously administered to my now desecrated and brown lawn.

The second Jesus took stock of the situation. “No lady, sod will NOT grow in your backyard because it is too shady. And you need better drainage around your basement walls or you will get flooded out.” Too late....I already had several inches of water in the basement due to those awful Spring floods. But I was lucky..... many people had water up to their basement rafters.....I had just a few inches. Nonetheless, I lost a lot of stuff. I hired him on the spot; and for these last two years he has proven to be a reliable, honest and hard working man. I don’t know what I would do without him. In the summer, he does landscaping chores. In the winter, he sees that I can get out of my driveway and out to the mailbox.

The new Jesus has a son, called “Junior.” Over the last two years I had tried to make friends with this 14 year-old who wears his pants down around his knees. He didn’t like to talk; and answered me in monosyllables. But to his favor; and probably a result of his upbringing and poverty; there were also no cell phones or earphones to contend with. I began to think: “Is there something wrong with this kid?” I tried to entice him into a friendship by giving him home baked cookies and candy bars; but he would barely make eye contact with me. Extremely shy or autistic perhaps? He accompanied his dad to work sometimes when he should have been in school. What was that all about? I once made the mistake of offering him a cold soda on a very hot summer day. He looked at me with disdain and replied, “I don’t drink diet stuff.” “Well then, how about a glass of ice cold water?” “I don’t drink water, either.”

All rightee then.

After that, I pretty much left Junior alone. I thought I made him uncomfortable and that we had nothing in common.

But I was wrong.

A few weeks ago I was outside looking at my forlorn “pond.” It is a small homemade mosquito haven surrounded by some rocks and plants; just off of my back deck. The pump that was supposed

to make the sound of trickling water (to attract birds) had long since tired itself out. But I saw something plop into the water; and later discovered that miraculously; a little frog had found a home there. Frog? From where? There are no ponds, springs, or creeks near me. Just aboveground swimming pools. How did this wayward frog get here? Excitedly, I showed Jesus Sr. my new resident, who just happened to be sunning himself in the mid-afternoon rays. I remember telling him that I thought maybe the frog was lonely, and that he needed someone or something to make him happy. We laughed about that. Then he and the sullen Junior went about cutting my grass.

The next day Jesus and Junior came back to trim some bushes along my fence line. I was on the deck and peering into the frog pond. (I continue to visit the frog every day.) Junior came from behind the garage with something cupped in his hands. He headed right over to me. I was a little stunned since he had never initiated a conversation. “Look,” he said as he gently unfolded his hands, “**I have a gift for you.** I found a friend for the frog....he was hopping around in your front yard. And it’s a toad.”

Hmmm, frog? toad? Just what is the difference between a frog and a toad? Junior knew. And he was excited, animated and full of details on how to educate me. His eyes sparkled when he talked. ***At least, he must have been paying attention in science class.*** He also told me about a salamander that he once had that ate crickets and bugs. He also shared a story about a grass snake that he found in his backyard that his mother wouldn’t let him keep in the house. He chuckled when I told him that his mother and I have a mutual agreement on where snakes should live.

He gently laid the toad down into the pond; and we both laughed as the critter sank under cover in the cool water of the stinky pond.

Now every time that Junior comes to my house he peers lovingly into the pond. “Senora, I see the frog but there is no toad.” I told him that perhaps these two just didn’t see eye-to-eye. Kind of like when adults don’t sometimes understand teenagers....their music, their clothes, their moods. I think he got the gist of my apology. In Buddhism we say that when you make a mistake you must correct it.

I discovered that there is nothing wrong with Junior, but there is a lot wrong with me. What ever happened to that old adage, ‘you have to meet someone halfway?’ A good and valuable lesson for this crusty old elder teacher.

Junior smiled, thanked me and looked me right in the eye when I gave him a candy bar.

His gift to me turned out to be much grander than the Zen Master Toad that magically appeared in my yard on that hot July day.

And the first Jesus? He gave me a gift, too. If there wouldn’t have been a first Jesus, I would have never had the pleasure of meeting the second one. I have finally let go of my anger.

***“Just when you think that you know everything; you find out how stupid you really are.”***

**\* The name Jesus is fictional; but the story is true.**

# Four Words (Who are you?)

By Anton Somlai

We humans like to talk - a lot. Unfortunately, many of us like to talk about ourselves - a lot. How many words do you really need to describe who you are? We put this question to the test at our Opening the Earth's Eye retreat at Sand Bay this September. During dialogues with teachers students were asked to describe themselves using only four words. Then they were asked to give permission to use those four descriptive words in this article for the newsletter. What follows are those four words answers. You may want to try this at home with your friends and family. We found that it opened up a number of interesting dialogues between teachers and students. Ask yourself what four words you would use to describe yourself?

1. Burst
2. Swirl
3. Trust
4. Shared

1. Happy
2. Nerd
3. Loves
4. Insecure

1. Poem
2. Fall
3. Listening
4. Trees

1. Travel
2. Open
3. Loving
4. Simple

1. Lefty
2. Runner
3. Reader
4. Friend

1. Family
2. Friends
3. Dance
4. Laughter

1. Sweet-pea
2. Dance
3. Love
4. Mom

1. Music
2. Love
3. Friends
4. Family

1. Hope
2. Lost
3. Compassion
4. Here

1. Dependable
2. Silly
3. Loving
4. Grateful

1. Love
2. Kind
3. Open
4. Curious

1. Survivor
2. Lover
3. Artist
4. Hopeful

1. Move
2. Move
3. Creatures
4. Home

1. Laughter
2. Water
3. Friends
4. Family

1. Lonely
2. Found
3. Community
4. Love

## 2009 Opening the Earth's Eye Retreat

### Zen Ants *By Elaine Martin*

I couldn't wait to get away from my busy life and go on the Zen retreat in Door county. All through the week prior, mind-chatter resounded in my head – so many things to think about with my new job – so many projects to do around the house – so many insecure feelings about my life - etc. The thoughts were twisting tightly around my mind, choking out peace.

Chris and I arrived at Sand Bay on Friday evening. As I stepped out of the car, I was immediately enchanted with the soft air, blue sky and tranquil lake. The busy mind-thoughts in my head began to dissipate. Mindlessly, I wandered toward the tranquil water of the bay. On the beach I looked down to see a colony of ants. I watched them work tirelessly with focused attention on one common purpose – to build an ant hill. Each one carries out grains of sand from their community dwelling to make a nesting architecture of interconnecting tunnels for their ant family. They work together, helping out wherever they are needed. If one ant struggles up the hill with a heavy load of sand, another ant helps him. I feel peaceful observing their simple life.



*Photos/Elaine Martin*

As I begin this retreat, I start to look for the similarities that exist between the peaceful ants on the beach and our Zen community. We are happiest, I noticed, when joined together with a common goal. The goal can be one of work, play, or everyday routine.

There were many opportunities to observe the symphony of cooperation that was so prevalent during the retreat: we gathered together on the beach at night to look at the planet Mars twinkle; we made malas for Compassion Fest; we tasted different kinds of coffee and voted for our favorite; we helped with chores to maintain the resort; we used our imaginations to create a treasure hunt; we pushed children on swings; we sat together and watched birds on the lake; we had meals together; we did morning bows together in unison; we bonded and laughed with those with whom we shared a cabin; were offered wisdom from our teachers during dialogues.

Just as the ants on the beach know their purpose, participating in these community activities helped me see my true purpose – to be helpful and compassionate to all beings that I encounter each day and to become generous without hesitation. There was a magic in being immersed in a compassionate group of people whose spirits were harmonious with my own. I am calmer now, less afraid, and laughter and love flows through me with greater ease.

The retreat at Sand Bay has renewed my spirit and has stopped the mind-chatter in my head. I have since begun a practice in the morning that refreshes my spirit daily. When I first awake, before I start to think about what I have to do for the day, I repeat the mantra, "Great love, great compassion, only helping."

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### Sunrise at Sand Bay

*By Elaine Martin*

Misty sunrise on the bay  
Tell me what you have to say

Perfect peace is everywhere  
Nature's beauty has no cares

Hérons cast a silhouette  
Clouds and wings a soft duet

Morning breeze is calm and cool  
Creates a memory like a jewel



# A New Language *By Marie Block*

A child who spoke as little as possible. Listening and watching instead. With a need to know someone quite well before speaking to them about anything of significance. Hiding behind the words of others, whether right or wrong. In high school, devising clever attempts to frame this quietness as a strength. A “good listener”. Someone who “pays attention.” A “good student.” Not wanting anyone to know that this quietness was often caused by fear. Fear of the embarrassment of a speech impediment jumping into the sentence. Fear of saying something another would not agree with, or even forcefully disagree with. Fear of not knowing the “correct” answer.

Coming to the Original Root Zen Center, learning that being quiet no longer meant “good student.” Discovering that “quiet” was for the mind, not for the heart’s voice. During practice, questions appeared. “Why do we talk so much here? Why do we talk instead of always act?”

Zen students ask questions, give Dharma Talks, and engage in dialogues with teachers. The mind is quieted so questions can freely appear and connections grow deep. Fears are explored to be released. Even writing is no longer a private statement to never be seen by another’s eyes. Words are written, digested, examined by teachers, rewritten, and given to the community. There can be no fear in clear conversations whether the words fly through the air or over paper.

We talk to develop deep relationships within the community. It is community that deepens love, gratitude, and compassion. It is community that opens truth and lets our true nature shine through. We sit, walk, sit, eat, and sit, to free ourselves of the thoughts that say “you have nothing to say.” Talking is no longer something to fill the air with, but to cleanse the air with.

Thich Nhat Hanh’s “The World We Have,” points to the importance of loving speech that lead to healing and cleansing. In his Five Mindfulness Trainings, the fourth explores how speech can be used as a healing tool. Hanh describes speech as a way to bring joy and happiness to others, and encourages only using words that create harmony. Hanh writes, “The Fourth Training asks us to practice loving speech and deep listening in order to relieve others of their suffering.” Notice that healing speech is not an attempt to prove anything or to make your ideas known. It is not about you at all. Clear speech is loving, compassionate, truthful, and used to help other beings. This cleansing speech can only happen when you listen deeply, with all senses, to what is present in each moment.

When the mind is full of self, one of two communication styles will appear. One, fear and worry rule, quieting true nature. Nothing is spoken. No words of healing. No kind wisdom. Nothing. Other beings can not depend on your help because you are too afraid to speak the truth. The second self-filled speech is hurtful speech. Words are thrown at others to harm, to manipulate, to get selfish needs met. Desire, anger, and ignorance rule this speech that can create wars between friends, within families, and amongst communities. Sometimes this speech is even used against one’s own person. Chastising or belittling one’s self for any reason is just as dangerous as using hateful speech towards another.

The need for clear, loving speech is not new. Over 2500 years ago, the Buddha established the “Noble Eight-Fold Path.” This path is a guide to living life based on true nature. One of the eight elements on the path is clear speech. Even when the Buddha was alive he often had to help his students transform suffering words into ones of peace and love. One word can cause war. One word can open the gate to a path of loving-kindness. One word. One sentence. One lifetime of clear, loving speech can bring joy to all beings.

Do you speak the language of compassion?

*Investigate this new language on Sunday, November 8 from 6:30-8:00pm with the class, “Any Questions?”  
Sign up at ORZC or call Marie Block at 262-308-4881 to register.*

# Coming to the Door: Heart Mountain Paul Reese

By Janine Anderson

Before Paul walked in the door for the first time, most of the sangha had met him.

We just didn't know it.

One day, Abbot Mathew Somlai posted an e-mail on the Zen Center's bulletin board, with a note that it was from a friend who was in the Army National Guard, and who had served time in Iraq. It was a message of strength and compassion and hope, from a place where I hadn't imagined hope and compassion could flourish. The words showed a courageously open heart.

The writer became friends with many of the Iraqi people near where he worked. He had his parents ship over hats for everyone. He gave one man a new pair of shoes, because the ones he had were horrible.

Another man in the area wasn't Iraqi. He lived in Jordan, and was in Iraq as a Department of Defense contractor. He had five children and a wife back home, and was in Iraq trying to make money. He had lost his job in Jordan, and that was all he could get. He wanted to get his children a PlayStation; the writer bought one for the family.

The e-mail was unsigned, and left me with a question: Who was this person? When Paul started coming to the Zen Center, the answer was clear.

He shared his humor, generosity, strength and love with us all – tossing beanbags, winter trips to indoor water parks, playing with the Zen Center babies, and in the finals of the Nerf gun karmic assassins game.

It was a duel: Paul vs. Master Teacher Tony Somlai. But Paul had forgotten his gun. Tony got Master Teacher Linda Somlai's gun for Paul to use.

When it came time for the shoot-out, Paul raised his gun to fire, but Tony just stood there. Paul pulled the trigger, and nothing happened. He tried again. Nothing.

"Misfire! Misfire!" he shouted.

Tony won the duel: He had removed all the darts from Linda's gun before giving it to Paul. When Paul decided to take precepts, the joke was that his dharma name would be Misfire Mountain.

Paul stood in front of the community at Buddha's Enlightenment in December to take precepts and receive his dharma name: Heart Mountain.

It is an honor to have that name, Paul said. He feels it is a good name, and one that fits.

Paul took precepts because he loves the community and wanted to show he was a part of it. Being part of the sangha means always having people there for him, Paul said, but also that the sangha knows he is there for all of them.

The sangha is caring, open, willing to share and full of people who are happy to be a part of it, Paul said. It is also honorable: "There's a sense of duty and pride in what you do and how you care for people," he said.

In August, Paul generously spent some of his time home on leave with all of us. His shining joy-light appeared for practice, for dharma talk, for Peace Grub, and at Camp Bodhi Root.

There, with all the Zen Center kiddos around, he and Mat waltzed through the community room. By the time someone had picked up a camera, the dance had ended, but the laughter went on.

*This is the first in an occasional series about how the members of this sangha appeared here. Each of us has a different story, but together, they comprise the quilt of our community.*



Paul Reese

## Compassion Fest 2009

(Left) Impromptu poets Janine and Darin. (Middle) Mathew and Tony hoping their rock is called in the Karmic Cake Walk. (Right) Chris with his special Compassion Fest coffee blend.



Photos/Dustin Block

# The Bare Bones

*ORZC's upcoming classes, ceremonies and community events*

## **Three Pillars Ceremony** 9 a.m. Sunday, Oct. 18

Great Faith, Great Effort and Great Doubt are the Three Pillars of our Zen Buddhist practice. Come take part in this Sunday morning community ceremony to directly experience what these teachings point to.

## **Intensive Peace Workshop** 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 24 *(See description on Page 1)*

## **Halloween Party** 5 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 31

What is your super power? Show it off super-hero style at this year's Halloween party! Watch for more details next month. Contact Janine Anderson (262) 930-1787 or Marie Block (262) 308-4881 with questions.

## **Studio Day** 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday Nov. 14 *(Please note date change)*

Practice your creativity, your intuition and your ability to make fun! All supplies provided. Bring some snack-type finger foods to share. Studio Day will be at Master Teachers Tony and Linda Somlai's studio.

## **Web of Light Ceremony** 7 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 9

Held each year in the heart of the week leading up to Buddha's Enlightenment, this ceremony was created by the ORZC community to celebrate our inter-connected nature. You are light connecting with light. Join us at the Web of Light Ceremony and let your true nature light shine!

## **Buddha's Enlightenment Ceremony** 4 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 13

Over 2,500 years ago the historic Buddha looked up, saw the morning star and realized his true nature of only helping. You are Buddha. Join us to celebrate your enlightened nature, and to support ORZC members taking precepts - spiritual commitments to live a life of loving-kindness. Open to all. Activities will be available for children, and one of ORZC's famous potlucks will follow. Bring a dish to share!



ORZC held its annual **Compassion Fest** on Sunday, Oct. 4 on the DeKoven Center grounds. This year's activities included a "Karmic Cake Walk," bake sale, critter mandala, 60-foot-long "Wall of Peace," impromptu poetry and many children's activities. Olympia Brown Unitarian Universalist Church in Racine also participated in the festival, which was organized by ORZC Abbot Mathew Somlai.

(Top) Laura and Anne pose by the Compassion Fest bake sale. (Bottom) Bethany shows the kids table isn't just for kids!

*Photos/Dustin Block*

Compassion  
Fest 2009



## Daily Schedule

*Meditation practices last about one hour and are held at ORZC, 600 21st St., unless otherwise noted.*

**Monday:** Practice from 6:20-7 a.m.; Dharma talk at 7 p.m. at ORZC.

**Tuesday:** Practice from 6:20-7 a.m.; 10 Direction Energy Helix, Sitting, 7 p.m.

**Wednesday:** Practice from 6:20-7 a.m.; Chanting, 6:30 p.m.; Sitting meditation at 7 p.m.

**Thursday:** Practice from 6:20-7 a.m.; Peace Grub at 5:30 p.m.

**Friday:** Morning Peace Practice from 6:20-7 a.m.

**Saturday:** Bows at 6:20 a.m. practice at 7 a.m. followed by breakfast out with the community; Garden Crew 9:30-11:30 a.m.

**Sunday:** Class at 7 p.m.

## Monthly Schedule

**Community picnic:** 4 p.m. on the first Sunday of each month at ORZC. Sign up at the Zen Center.

**Practice dialogues:** Practice dialogues with senior teachers are held on Tuesday and Thursday morning, Wednesday nights and the last Saturday morning of the month. Dialogues are also available upon request.

**Root &  
Branch**

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OriginalRootZenCenter  
600 21st St.  
Racine, WI 53403



October 2009

Root & Branch

Original Root Zen Center

## Sunday Night Classes for 2009

[All classes are scheduled from 6:30 to 8:00 PM]

### October 25 - "Dharma, Karma, and Rock and Roll: Song Lyrics that Speak the Truth"

This 2-part class (also on November 1) gives the hippest perspective of the Buddha's teaching for the 21st century. Find the true teaching behind "I can't get no satisfaction" and other great rock hits.

### November 1 - Part 2 of "Dharma, Karma, and Rock and Roll: Song Lyrics that Speak the Truth"

### November 8 - "Any Questions?"

This class will deal with the questions that are at the root of a Buddhist practice. The class will explore what it is to have a "question" that builds connections and deepens practice.

The class will help you find out how questions can be discovered everywhere.

### Nov. 15 - "Herb Energy"

This class will help you open your senses to the year-round energy of herbs grown in the ORZC garden.

### November 22 - "Sharing Stories"

This class will help you look deeply at what story you bring to this life. Also, the class will help you discover the stories that others also bring to this life.

### December

Due to the holidays and other ORZC activities, there will be no Sunday night classes in December.

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**New Book from ORZC!**

*Peace Vigil*  
- *Living Without Hesitation*  
by Anton M. Somlai  
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