

# along the Path

Fall 2011

The Newsletter of the Mindfulness Practice Center of Fairfax

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## LISTENING TO THE BELL

by Anh-Huong Nguyen

In mindfulness practice, the bell is a very dear friend on the path. Energies of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, which are the Three Jewels in Buddhist teaching, are manifested through the bell's sound.

The Buddha here means Buddha nature, the capacity to become fully awake. Awake to joy and suffering within and around us.

Dharma is the practice that helps us to develop understanding and compassion. Sangha is the community that practices mindfulness, concentration and insight to bring about peace, harmony and collective awakening.

\* \* \*

The bell's sound echoes the Awakened One's voice calling us back to the present moment. We do not say "striking the bell," but rather "inviting the bell to sound." Upon hearing the bell, we stop everything -- even our thinking. We say silently "listen, listen" while breathing in. "This wonderful sound brings me back to my true home" while breathing out. After enjoying three in-breaths and out-breaths, we resume our activity. This is the fundamental Buddhist practice of stopping. It allows us to be inhabited with energies of the Three Jewels, to feel solid, calm and fresh again.



Listen, listen. This wonderful sound brings me back to my true home

The first lesson from my teacher on how to invite the bell to sound was more than 30 years ago. Since then, every time I have an opportunity to sound the bell or listen to it, I am in an embrace of love and protection. I return to the safe refuge in me. I am home. I was taught to follow my breathing while reciting the following verse in my heart:

Body, speech, and mind held in perfect  
oneness,  
I send my heart along with the sound of the  
bell.  
May the hearers awaken from forgetfulness  
And transcend all anxiety and sorrow.

\* \* \*

The practice is to follow our breath while the sound resonates, so that our body, mind and heart can relax and open in unity to the joy of

being alive. It is within this space of warmth, peace and joy that suffering deep within us is gently embraced. During the time of inviting and listening to the bell, energies of peace and compassion in our heart naturally flow into the world. How comforting to be able to send our heart, our best, along with the bell's sound.

Our intention is to invest 100% of ourselves into whatever we do. Be it sounding or listening to the bell, sitting or walking, eating or drinking, talking or

listening. We experience relief and contentment because mindfulness and concentration are there.

*Our intention is to invest 100% of ourselves into whatever we do. Be it sounding or listening to the bell, sitting or walking, eating or drinking, talking or listening. We experience relief and contentment because mindfulness and concentration are there.*

When our body is in one place and our mind another, the pain of separation arises. Mindful breathing reunites body and mind, brings relief to this pain, and calms the body-mind. Sometimes we develop a habit of ending a formal meditation period and going on with other chores, believing that a desirable goal has been met.

Drawing a line between practice and non-practice can cause our mind to wander from our body again. Mindfulness then fades away and concentration dies out. It explains why we do not have enough energy to move beyond the point where we are stuck in our lives. This can happen even after many years of practicing.

\* \* \*

When practice and non-practice boundaries dissolve, the energy of mindfulness begins to flow freely and the practice becomes very enjoyable. Every breath and step is an

opportunity to come home to ourselves and to develop concentration.

When our concentration is strong, breathing mindfully becomes effortless. Letting go of the struggle to become mindful enables us to enjoy breathing. And when we can enjoy breathing alone, we embrace doing everything in mindfulness. It is difficult to develop mindfulness and concentration if we are not able to enjoy breathing.

At times we have wonderful insights into our relationships and lives. But just a few weeks later, those insights can evaporate. We struggle with doubts and fear. We are not sure if we should continue on this path.

\* \* \*

It is not unusual to go through periods of ups and downs on any spiritual journey. But there are ups and downs that can help us to be more compassionate and committed to the practice, while others can take away our faith, joy and gratitude.

We each have a "dharma body." Mindfulness, concentration and insight are the source of nourishment for our dharma body. When it is deprived, we no longer have the energy to continue steadily on the path of happiness and liberation.

Concentration holds the fruits of practice and insights and helps them ripen. We may forget that insights we have today are the same ones we had months ago. Mindfulness and concentration have to be steady and strong to hold our insights.

Insights that do not have concentration as their solid container will be lost quickly. Those held in steady concentration are the ones that have a transforming affect on our lives. Sometimes with a new insight, we cannot continue to live our life as we have before.

\* \* \*

Let us be diligent in cultivating mindfulness and concentration. To be diligent, we need to relax and take pleasure in returning to our loved ones, the clouds, the birds, the trees, the flowers, and the work we do.

In this way, we will be inhabited with the energies of the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. Avalokitesvara, the bodhisattva of great compassion, will be so happy to find us as her companions.



Morning Glory

## A PRACTICE SESSION OF INVITING THE BELL

by Thu Nguyen



Inviting the bell

The bell is an instrument of the Dharma. Its sound is the Dharma itself because it has the capacity to bring us back to the present moment. Therefore the sound of the bell should have a calming and liberating effect on the listener.

Before inviting the bell to sound, we return to our mindful breath, recite silently a gatha so that our mind becomes peaceful and our peace can be carried through the sound of the bell. Here is one of the gathas for the bell master:

Body, Speech, and Mind held in perfect  
oneness (breathe in)  
I send my heart along with the sound of  
the bell (breathe out)  
May the hearer awaken from  
forgetfulness (breathe in)  
And transcend all anxiety and sorrow  
(breathe out)

With a firm gesture, we touch the bell's rim with the stick to wake up the bell. The gesture is not strong, but just enough to generate only a small sound that everyone can hear. Make sure that people have heard the wake up sound by listening to the energy in the room to feel the readiness of the community as they come to a level of quietness. If not, make it again, a little louder, to get people's attention. Waking up the

bell, we wake up ourselves and the whole community from getting lost in thinking or conversations.

As listeners, when we hear the wake up sound, we stop what we are doing, adjust the standing or sitting posture and return to our mindful breath. If you are holding any object in your hands, put it down. We may have a gesture of centering ourselves, such as joining our palms together or resting our hands on the heart or the belly. The posture, the gesture, and the breath help us to concentrate and bring the body and mind to a state of unity.

After gathering the community energy, the bell master will make a full sound. Instead of striking straight on the bell, the bell master should move the stick in a curve like a parabola in the direction upward to help the sound of the bell rising up and outward. Otherwise the sound becomes stuck and cannot flow. Visualize the parabola: its vertex should get in touch with the rim of the bell through the movement. After inviting the bell, bring the stick to a resting position either in your palms or by holding it straight with one of its ends resting on the floor.

When we hear the full sound of the bell, we follow our breathing for at least three in-breaths and out-breaths and say silently in our heart a gatha:

Listen, listen  
This wonderful sound brings me back to  
my true home.

Another full sound of the bell can be invited after three full breaths. With three full sounds of the bell, we will have the chance to breathe mindfully for at least nine breaths, and this helps us to bring our mind to a place of calmness and peace. When the whole community practices together, the energy of mindfulness and concentration that is generated is very powerful. Inviting and listening to the bell becomes a sacred time for the bell master and the listener.

## **THE SHEER PLEASURE OF STOPPING AND RESTING**

**by Joyce Bailey**

One of the most wonderful and pleasant parts of our practice is the invitation to stop and rest – rest the body and rest the mind. For me, this can be difficult to put into practice once the day gets underway. My mind can easily be drawn into ideas, projects and feelings and pretty soon my attention is drawn into a mythical world of worries, plans and ruminations. When I remember to stop I can return to the reality of the present moment, look around and smile. The richness and joy of being alive return.

Thay has given us many beautiful, gentle ways to remember to stop during the day. The ringing of the telephone is a reminder to stop and breathe. The sight of red brake lights on the car in front of us is a reminder to stop, breathe and smile. The sounding of a grandfather clock beckons us back to our True Home.

For a while now, I have tried a variation of the Grandfather Clock practice by installing the “Mindfulness Bell” on my iphone. This free application allows me to hear a beautiful bell tone every hour. I set the bell to go off early in the morning so it is one of the first things I hear when I wake up, even before my alarm clock goes off. In these minutes before work or the plans of the day enter my consciousness, the sound of the bell is an invitation to lie in bed and take one, two or three luxurious breaths before getting up. Breathing in the morning air, looking out the window at the trees and the sky, slowly becoming more awake... this is a nice time to recite Thay’s gatha on waking up:

Waking up this morning, I smile.  
24 brand new hours lie before me.  
I vow to live each one in awareness

And look at all beings with eyes of compassion  
After rising, the sound of the bell is by my side  
or the rest of the day and the night. Like a gentle

friend, it calls to me from the computer at work: "Stop, my busy friend. Stop and enjoy your breath. Feel it enter your body, flow to every cell, and flow back into the room." After this moment of refreshment, the emails don't seem as burdensome to read and respond to, the project I am working on becomes lighter and more joyful.

Sometimes the bell rings during a conversation with someone or during a meeting. Some people never hear it but others look around for the source of the sound. If it seems appropriate, I explain what it is and why I have it. Most people smile in understanding and some join me in enjoying a moment of quiet the next time the bell sounds.

Sometimes the bell sounds and I am right there present in the moment. Other times, the bell brings me back and I smile in gratitude.

Hearing the bell each hour, I have become more aware of how quickly time goes by. I find myself asking, "What has happened in this hour since the bell last sounded? My days on earth are limited. How am I spending this precious time?" It has been an opportunity to look more closely at how I go through the day. What is the hour-to-hour quality of my experience? Am I awake and aware or just drifting along? What things do I invest my time in? Which actions are bringing peace and compassion to myself and others? Which actions are attempts to escape difficult thoughts and run from painful feelings? Another aspect of opening for me has been to watch my feelings rise and fall during the day. At the 5:00 am bell I might be feeling open,

relaxed and generous; at the 10:00 am bell tired and grumpy; at the noon bell happy to be with a friend. The emotions are captured by each sound of the bell, like the click of a camera, and I get to look deeply at the snapshot. It is easier to see how quickly feelings come and go throughout the day and this makes it a little easier to let go

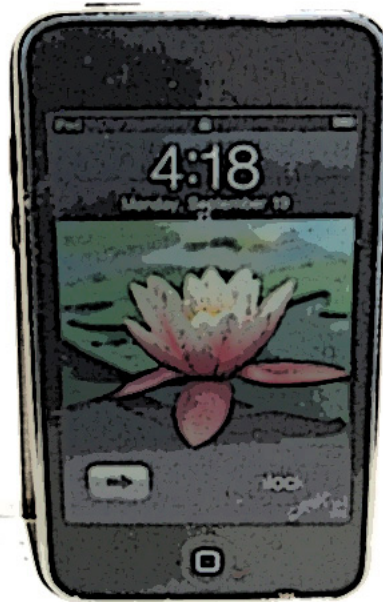
of these different stories and the feelings embedded in them.

Sometimes I will start the day with a persistent feeling: sadness, free-floating anxiety, or irritation. The bell is a soft reminder to take a minute and hold this feeling so it doesn't build up over the course of the day. It may be days or weeks until I understand what the feeling is, but I can hold it tenderly even if I don't know its name.

Sometimes the bell sounds and I feel too driven to stop

and breathe, or I can manage only one quick breath. This is a very valuable moment for me. Trying my best not to judge, I ask myself "What feeling or task is catching me this strongly? What things are making it particularly difficult to stop and breathe? What am I in such a hurry about? What has me feeling so frantic?" It is an opportunity to learn more about myself and befriend many parts of myself that often get lost in the noise and busyness of day to day life.

With awareness comes greater peace, joy and gratitude. I am grateful to my friend the bell, my Sangha sisters and brothers, our teachers and our beloved Practice that we share. May we all be peaceful, happy and light.



A bell of mindfulness!

## MINDFUL WALKING: A PRACTICE OF PATIENCE

by Garrett Phelan

Sometimes I find sitting meditation can be difficult for me to be fully present. Although my body is still, my mind is busy.

Everything is whirling together in my mind: physical discomfort, monkey thoughts, the past, the future.

Recently at Thursday night sangha, I was asked to share some thoughts about mindful walking. Patience. Patience was the word that arose. To walk mindfully is to be patient. Slow down, be patient and allow the present moment to unfold fully.

To arrive in the present moment, I find walking meditation can open up all the spaciousness within me. There is much more space there than one may think. Once I open up to this spaciousness, it allows me to open up my heart to the present moment and all the joy and pleasure available in being mindful. The step is not only spacious, but there is a graciousness to a slow, patient step.

Breathing in, I step. I slow down, open up space allowing that step to unfold slowly and naturally, which allows the present moment to unfold slowly and naturally. In that step, when my foot leaves the earth, I am awake, light, and accepting. My other foot is stable, creating balance. When my foot touches the ground, and I know I am alive *right here, right now*, I am present to see the conditions for happiness. I am awake: body, mind, and breath in harmony.



Slow step, patient step

If I can experience such a mindful step -- patience, slowing down, a breath, harmony, space and wakefulness, my heart begins to open. I not only accept the space available in the present moment, but my heart begins to feel this spaciousness: the space for compassion and understanding to enter into that moment, that step. Compassion for myself is one step, compassion for others is another step. When I have compassion for myself in the present moment, in my present step, then truly, as Thay says, peace *is* every step. Gentle step, peaceful step.

When I have slowed down, released all the tension from my forehead, face, neck, shoulders, or whatever parts of the body become receptacles of my fears, my anger, sadness or loneliness -- I can relax. My thoughts and feelings from the past are not carried with me, nor are my anxieties and fear of the future luring me prematurely out of the great space in the present moment. I am patient. Now my steps are gentle and peaceful almost without effort.

Even if I cannot quite let go of my struggling and suffering, I have brought my body and mind together in the present moment with a mindful step. Even amidst the turmoil of my life, I have, by that act of a mindful step, created more space and patience for right now. My heart is more open even when I am in the midst of suffering. I have a safe and compassionate space to rest in my step. I have manifested a calm, a peace, in my step, in others, and in our community. I have had the patience to allow the present moment to bloom fully.

As I slowly shift my weight, I feel the breath, the heartbeat, nerves, muscles, and joints, all working in harmony as the step gently unfolds. The full weight of the whole body rests with that step, along with the mind: stable and safe, open to the present moment. Equanimity. All existence has taken me into the present moment and my step. The whole universe is present: family, friends, and ancestors. Heart open, compassion present. Here I am: I have arrived, home and free.

### *Walking Meditation Gatha*

*Slow step*

*Patient step*

*Gracious step*

*Spacious step*

*Stepping, I am awake*

*Stepping, I am alive*

*Stepping, my heart is open*

*Stepping, compassionate heart*

*Gentle step*

*Peaceful step*

*Present moment*

*Wonderful moment*

*I have arrived*

*I am home*

## **WALK FOR OTHERS**

**By Bill Menza**

When I do my morning walking meditation,  
I say "Stable" when one foot touches down  
And "Solid" when the other touches  
As I walk for all the people in these houses  
And passing cars.  
For all those caught by busyness,  
In jails and prisons,  
Wars, conflict,  
Being beaten, tortured, raped,  
For those who do not have enough to eat,  
Who are old, sick, dying, or dead,  
For these trees, the birds flying to them,  
The flowers, Mother Earth.  
I walk for all of them.



Along The Path: Meadowlark Gardens

## FOUR POEMS AND MINDFUL ARTS IN ANNAPOLIS

by Phyllis Culham



A flame, a flower

Jane and Garrett Phelan of the MPCF led a Day of Mindfulness for about 40 Sangha friends and guests of the Mindfulness Practice Group of Annapolis on Feb. 20, 2011. We continued to explore pathways of mindfulness to which Garrett had pointed us. We had long been interested in mindfulness in the arts, but we were deeply moved by Garrett's showing us his handcrafted books and sharing poetry. Some members almost immediately wrote poetry on how they were inspired by the day:

### AFTER SATURDAY by Cherri L. McGrew

After Saturday.....  
I rediscovered.....  
Peace  
Being In the moment  
My sense of joy and wonder  
Trust in myself and others  
Acceptance that the universe will and does  
provide exactly what I need  
My sense of humor  
No need for words, be with feelings

### 3 POEMS by Julie Roehm

Flute  
flame  
flower  
call me home  
to myself.  
-----  
only this  
hot tea  
fragrance of orange spice  
smiling  
-----  
I waken  
and let go  
the war abates

Before February had even ended, we were planning a Day of Mindfulness in the Arts. The reader can surely imagine our happiness when we read in the summer issue 2011 of *Along the Path* that other local sanghas were also deeply engaged with the arts as mindfulness practices.

We began to create our upcoming October 22nd Day of Mindfulness in the Arts from the premise that we wished to be inclusive in terms of both arts and mindfulness practices. The resulting event integrates short periods of both sitting and walking meditation with hour-and-a-quarter long workshops, morning and afternoon. Morning workshops: Haiku, watercolor, dance. Afternoon workshops: pinhole photography, prose writing including memoir, singing and chanting.

Members of The Mindfulness Practice Group of Annapolis are delighted to invite you to meet some of our Sangha friends and artists on our Day of Mindfulness in the Arts on October 22, 2011 from 9:15-4:30. No experience is required for any workshop.

If you would like more information about the Day of Mindfulness in the Arts go to:  
<http://www.mpg-annapolis.org/mpginfo.html>



## A WALK IN MEADOWLARK GARDENS

By Jill McKay

On Sunday July 24<sup>th</sup>, a very hot day, friends from MPCF, the Boat of Compassion, and other area Sanghas, met at Meadowlark Gardens in Vienna, VA to spend time together practicing mindful walking and enjoying each other's company in the outdoors. Despite the hot dry summer, the gardens at Meadowlark were beautiful and filled with the freshness of lovingly tended plants. We walked slowly and peacefully to the butterfly garden where the flowers and the butterflies inspired us to sing "I Am A Cloud."

We then made our way to the lake which has a walkway to a gazebo in the lake itself. Our intention was to enjoy the shade and the fresh breeze coming over the water. What we experienced was the cycle of life and

death, impermanence, and suffering. An injured baby swallow was struggling to get off the ground. In its struggles it fell into the water. There was a wild rush of water, and within a split second it had been snapped up by a large Koi. Those who witnessed it gasped and cried out in shock. Even as we breathed with the emotions that this event stirred up, we noted that the adult swallows flying back and forth catching mosquitoes were

making it possible for us to sit happily in the breeze without being bitten. The cycle of life and death was going on all around us, and so we sang "Breathing In, Breathing Out" to center ourselves in the present moment.

Thay teaches us that there are more than enough conditions for happiness. He describes walking in a garden where we see many beautiful trees and plants and one dying tree. Our practice of being mindfully present helps us to enjoy what is beautiful in the garden, even as we acknowledge that not all is perfect. So it was on our walk in

Meadowlark. Even though it was extremely hot,

and we were distressed by the fate of the small bird, we were able to be open to the many conditions for happiness around us. As we walked slowly by the flower beds, we had time to notice that the plants had names, and they seemed to call out to



Mother and child at Meadowlark Gardens

us, "I am here; I have a name, like you!" We had the time to be present with each other, to feel safe to be ourselves, and to be nourished by the warm-hearted openness of a community of friends.

Our next community walk will take place at Brookside Gardens in Wheaton, MD on Sunday October 16<sup>th</sup> from 9:30 until 11:30 a.m. You will find us waiting at the Visitor's Center next to the parking lot at 9:30am.

## PRACTICING WITH LYME'S

by Elisabeth Dearborn



When I put my hand to the back of my neck, there it is. A tick. Out in the woods, I've been clearing an old mesh fence from the forest's edge. I ask my friend Beth who'd been working with me to take it out. We find tweezers in the medicine cabinet. "Good job," the nurse tells me the next morning when she removes the last part of the tick and finishes the job with a double dose of doxycycline, standard tick bite treatment in Vermont to help prevent Lyme's Disease. A few days later I get quite ill and take ten days of penicillin. A few days after that, an insect bites me in bed just as I am waking up. I jump out of bed, my leg swelling like a watermelon. Not exactly the usual. The naturopath says, "Let's have your blood checked. Sometimes unusual responses to ordinary events suggest Lyme's is present in the body." Without waiting a month to hear back from the lab about my blood, I go to a traditional Vietnamese medicine doctor who treats Lyme's with tea made from dried plant material. Dr. Quang takes my pulses. "Lyme's still in your system," he tells me. "I have herbs for you."

I begin to make this very potent tea every other morning. I make enough for two nights each time. I have a glass cooking pot, a wooden spoon, only ceramic or glass cups when I drink the tea. It takes 3 1/2 hours to cook it down to the concentrated form I drink it in. The first week I feel like I am having mild flu. This is a sign of the Lyme parasites dying off. My energy is low. Several weeks into the nightly tea drinking, my right knee dislocates spontaneously. I don't think this is related to Lyme's. I am definitely weirded out and call the physical therapist who evaluates it and gives me some exercises to do. Then, a few mornings later, I wake up with intense inflammation in my right knee and in my left shoulder. I can barely

move. The acupuncturist who treats me for the inflammation has had Lyme's. He adds a protocol of internal use of two essential oils for a week and tells me Lyme's often settles in joints, particularly the knees. "Read this book," he tells me, writing down Stephen Buhner's *Healing Lyme*. Just then, Anh Huong calls. "How are you?" she asks.

*What a good question. I'm confused. What is this?* I say from deep inside the uncertainty. I am far away from "present moment, wonderful moment." I want to complain. Hearing my sister's voice doesn't remind me at once that I am loved, but I wake up the next morning back in the sangha body. I am having Lyme's for all of you. I am experiencing this uncertainty for all of you. Big sigh of relief. This is our Lyme's, our uncertainty. I can stop going to the future saying *What if...?* I shift into being curious, sending love with great confidence to my liver. It isn't my liver, it's the liver of all of us. As if my life depended on it,

Breathing in all your love,  
Breathing out to my liver.

I keep this up in my morning practice, whenever I veer off into the uncertainty of the future of my body. Back to the breath. One morning a few weeks later I wake up with no pain in my joints. Carefully I move my knees, kick my toes. Wow! No toothache, says Thay. I can move. I am so grateful to be alive. When I was in so much pain, I thought about people who live that way for years. Would I be living that way for years? I felt my life shrink down in terms of what I could do. I wrote more and steadily. I couldn't do most of my life as I was used to doing it. I let it fall away and loved writing. My assignment was to concentrate on sending love to my liver and not getting caught up in the future. The day the pain disappeared, my energy came back.

Sure enough, when Dr. Quang took my pulses, "Liver better," he said, smiling his big smile.

## THE BAT

By Joan Rooney

## MINDFULNESS MOMENTS

## GUITAR GATHA

by Patrick Smith

The bat showed up one morning outside my bedroom window, safely tucked and sleeping between the panes. I was startled to see him, but then remembered my promise to protect all living creatures. I used his appearance to practice what I had learned in the sangha. I began to look forward to his arrival every morning after his nights away in the woods. I tried to appreciate his appearance.

My daughter, on the other hand, was horrified that we had a bat living in the window. Her strong reaction quickly brought back my old ways. I opened the windows to force the bat to fly away. As I did, I saw the bat react in fear and I felt his fear as my own. I deeply regretted my action.

A number of days have passed and there is still no sign of the bat's return. Each morning I am hopeful he will return and give me another chance.

## EGOHOLIC

By Bill Menza

First saying: "I'm an egoholic."  
Might be the first step of many  
On the Path to an enlightened mind.  
For "me," "mine,"  
"I need." "I want." "I must be (whatever)."  
Are heavy intoxicants,  
Which cloud and make the mind more confused.  
So to safeguard against this,  
When in a group or with another,  
Even yourself,  
Begin with: "I'm an egoholic."

Thay's wonderful book *Present Moment, Wonderful Moment: Mindfulness Verses for Daily Living* is a collection of gathas we can use to strengthen our practice in daily living. Many years ago I took part in an Introduction to Mindfulness class with Richard Brady. In this course each week we were invited to develop a gatha applicable to our own lives, something to bring us back to the present moment while at work or home.

A little over a year ago I came up with this gatha that I use daily.

### OPENING MY GUITAR CASE

As I open my case, I open my heart to  
understanding.

As I reach for my guitar, I reach out to love.

As I put on my guitar, I am free.

### DOG WALKING MEDITATION #2

by Maryanne Noibles

Sahji, our mindful companion dog, still has some lessons for us. On the way back home from our walk, Sahji encountered a barking dog. Horrified, I watched as the girl who had the barking dog on a leash fell down right in front of me. The barking dog went straight for Sahji, and the two dogs went at it. Helplessly, I listened to all the barking and screaming, but I could not turn around; my attempts were all in vain.

Luckily the mother came along. She retrieved her daughter and the barking dog. The mayhem was over. Sahji went on his way as if nothing ever happened!

Later, I laughed as I shared this story with my husband. Dogs seem like natural masters at impermanence. I wondered if this could be a lesson for all of us?

## UPCOMING EVENTS

*(Please visit the MPCF website for updates, suggested donations, and directions.)*

### *Ongoing Activities in the UUCF Chapel (Program Building)*

#### **Morning Guided Sitting Meditation:**

Opportunity to relax, sit quietly and comfortably. Practice enjoying each moment of sitting and mindful walking.

Monday to Friday 8:15-9:15 am (except Thursday)  
Thursday 8:00–9:00 am

#### **Morning Mindful Movement:**

Learn to be mindful with movements. Improve one's health and vitality with soft physical exercises, Taiji and Qigong.

Thursday 9:15-10:00 am

#### **Noon Guided Sitting Meditation:**

Thursday 12:00-12:45 pm

#### **Thursday Evenings Meditation with Anh- Huong:**

A peaceful evening of meditation, mindful movements, walking meditation and dharma sharing. Every Thursday from 7:30-9:00 pm

#### **First Thursday of month: Recitation of the Five Mindfulness Trainings and Dharma talk by Anh-Huong.**

Tea and cookies 6:45-7:25pm. Sitting begins at 7:30pm. Before meditation you are invited to join us for tea and cookies any time between 6:30 and 7:20 pm.

### *Workshops & Classes*

#### **Weekend Retreats in West Virginia led by Anh-Huong and Thu Nguyen December 9-11, 2011 and March 16-18, 2012**

**From 6:00 pm Friday to 2:00 pm Sunday**  
Practicing mindfulness in a rural setting for the whole weekend, together with a loving and supportive community.

#### **Days and Half Days of Mindfulness (see website for details)**

**led by Anh-Huong and Thu Nguyen  
Saturdays at the MPCF in Oakton, Virginia (in the Chapel) Oct. 8, Oct. 22, Nov. 26 and Dec. 27**

## Special Classes and Events

**(see the website for more information)**

- Class: "Speaking from the Heart, Listening from the Heart"  
Oct. 11 to Nov. 15
- Joyful Walk in Brookside Gardens on Oct. 16
- Class: "Deep Relaxation and Healing Movements"  
Nov. 2 to Dec. 7

### *Submission Guidelines*

**Along The Path** is a newsletter of the art of mindful living. Practicing mindfulness cultivates understanding, love, compassion, and joy. This practice helps us to take care of and transform suffering in our lives and in our society.

**Along The Path** is intended as an inspiration and teaching resource for those practicing mindfulness in daily life.

Writers please submit stories, poems, photos, art and teachings on mindfulness, based on your direct experience of transformation through the practice of mindfulness. Instead of giving academic or intellectual views, the teachings emphasize simple and successful ways to transform the difficulties and limitations in our lives so that each day becomes an experience of peace, happiness, and freedom. Send submissions to Garrett Phelan [gjphelan@gmail.com](mailto:gjphelan@gmail.com)

### *Along the Path*

Fall 2011

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This newsletter is published by the Mindfulness Practice Center of Fairfax (MPCF)  
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This newsletter and the work of the MPCF are made possible by the financial support of members and friends. Contributions are deeply appreciated. Contributions are tax-deductible and may be sent to the above address.