GBF Calendar
Call 415/974-9878 for news about GBF events. To skip the recording and leave a message, press 5.

San Francisco Events
2 Apr., Thursday Sitting, 7:45 pm: meditation, at the home of Bill Kirkpatrick.

5 Apr., Sunday Sitting 9:30/10:30 am
SFBC, 37 Bartlett St.

7 Apr., Steering Committee Meeting, 7:30 pm, at the home of Larry White.

9 Apr., Thursday Sitting, 7:45 pm: meditation, at the home of Lee Robbins.

12 Apr., Sunday Sitting, 9:30/10:30 am
SFBC, 37 Bartlett St.

16 Apr., Thursday Sitting, 7:45 pm at the home of Mark Marion.

18 Apr., GBFs Feed-The-Homeless Project at the Hamilton Family center.
To participate, contact Clint Seiter.‡

19 Apr., Sunday Sitting, 9:30/10:30 am
SFBC 37 Bartlett St.

23 Apr., Thursday Sitting, 7:45 pm, at the home of Larry White.

26 Apr., Sunday Sitting, 9:30/10:30 am
SFBC, 37 Bartlett St.

30 Apr., Thursday Sitting, 7:45 pm, at the home of Larry White.

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GBF's 5th Annual Hike to Chimney Rock

Come join us on a short, but quite spectacular hike and picnic at Chimney Rock in Pt. Reyes Park on Saturday, April 25. Chimney Rock is famous among Nature lovers for its incredible springtime displays of wildflowers, and with all the rain we've been having, they should be more spectacular than ever. Drake’s Bay on one side and Pacific Ocean on the other provide dramatic backgrounds. We might also visit the Pt. Reyes lighthouse. The hike is short (a mile away) but the drive up there is long; be prepared for an all day excursion. This will be a pot luck picnic so please bring a dish to share with others. We will be carpooling from the GBF Center (37 Bartlett St.) at 9:00 am. Bring warm clothing (it gets windy), a blanket and sun block. Rain cancels. For more information call Clint Seiter.

Feeding the Homeless

For the past four years, a small group of GBFers have been involved with a project to provide a monthly dinner for the residents of the Hamilton Family Center, a shelter for homeless families. Dinners include a main dish, side vegetable, salad, desert and juice (all made from scratch) in quantities enough to feed 50 to 60 people. Although GBF contributed a monthly stipend, the majority of the cost for the food (which is the only expense) came from private donations. While the volunteers were gracious about it, it was awkward hitting them up for money after they had spent the entire afternoon cooking the meal. Fortunately, we no longer have to do this. Starting this March, GBF will pay for all expenses, which are approximatly $140/month. This ensures the continuation of this project, which has been such a success. Our heartfelt thanks to GBF for making this happen.‡

GBF Mission Statement

Gay Buddhist Fellowship supports Buddhist practice in the gay men's community. It is a forum that brings together the diverse Buddhist traditions to address the spiritual concerns of gay men in the Bay Area, the United States, and around the world. GBF's mission includes cultivating a social environment that is inclusive and caring.

The Gay Buddhist Fellowship Newsletter is published monthly by the Gay Buddhist Fellowship. All signed articles express the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the GBF.‡
Gratitude
By Daishin David Sunseri

We are thankful for our life in each moment, in each day, in each experience. This is our everyday practice of gratitude for all we have been given: for the holy Dharma, for our present existence, for our karma, for our place in the world. This gratitude can be expressed in various ways. We do it in many of our Buddhist traditions symbolically by making offerings. These offerings are usually light, incense, flowers, food, water, bells, gongs as well as more involved rituals. But really the offerings are about being grateful and about giving up our delusions of who we think we are.

Many times we forget to express gratitude in our moment to moment life and also forget to do it in a way that we really appreciate what our actual experience is. We are not so grateful for the truth of each experience, although we constantly have the opportunity to create offerings for ourselves and those around us. For example, when we get up in the morning and make ourselves a cup of coffee or tea, the open attitude we bring to it, how we fix it, drink it, and the care we give to that experience, can be an expression of thanks. This opportunity exists all the time. Do we make our tea or coffee with the idea of just getting it done in a hurry, so we can get on to the next thing, or do we give ourselves over to its preparation? Can we simply enjoy and be with the activity of heating and pouring the water, adding the aromatic tea of coffee, enjoying the flavor, savoring the drinking? And after, cleaning the cup and placing it in a place to dry.

GBF Calendar
(continued from page 1)

East Bay Events

Sunday Sitting (East Bay), 1st & 3rd Sundays, 10:30 am, at the home of Geoff McInary.

Sonoma Events

Monday Sittings (Sonoma) 7:30 pm, contact Avery

When we care for things this way, for our life this way, it is the actually caring for all beings. Other people notice when we are being intimately present in all activity, and how this creates an atmosphere that affirms life, affirms the joy of no separation, of deep connectedness. By doing things mindfully, we offer each moment’s experience in gratitude, and appreciate its unfolding. We can do this in every part of our daily lives. By caring for the people and things around us, we make real the Bodhisattva vow to save all beings. First, we take care of ourselves by offering each activity as a part of our practice. It’s impossible to help others without first being conscious and mindful of our own situation. So we start with ourselves. When we actually do our practice and create an atmosphere of gratitude in our lives, this produces an over-flowing quality in us that naturally extends to others. We are living more fully, we appreciate our life as it is, and that is apparent to others. They can experience a certain honest and compassionate quality in us, which is the activity of a Bodhisattva, the activity of a Buddha.

Starting with ourselves first also means that we see where we are at this moment; we pay attention to our life in the most direct uncomplicated way. We simplify things. We watch our own minds and bodies, our breath, our thoughts and feelings. So this Bodhisattva practice begins with no detailed mental plans of trying to accomplish a lot of things. It is difficult to be present when we are very busy. So we simply pay attention to what is going on in us and around us. If we are doing this carefully and not trying to accomplish too much, a certain stability arises in us and a gratitude for our lives. At this point our natural impulse is to want to make an offering, to express that appreciation. Instead of trying to “get things done”, it is more helpful if we make a simple offering to ourselves or to the situation we are in, to remind ourselves what we really need is to recognize that “the Buddha” or “the Good” is in the process as well as in the accomplishment. Buddha is here, in our present situation, in us. So in some sense, the most real accomplishment of our lives is staying with ourselves, our bodies and minds; always coming back to the place of gratitude, to the place of offering, to the place of giving up, to the place of utter and complete attention to this very moment. The great work for us is to know fully what we are doing and then to give thanks for that knowledge. This is the practice of gratitude, the practice of living a grateful life. Thanksgiving to Buddha, Dharma, Sangha.
**The Local Dharma**

**April '98**

[Note: Sometimes schedules change, so we recommend you call to confirm events.]

**Special Events**

GBF has been invited to help the residents at Vajrapani with their annual clean up on Saturday April 15. The residents at Vajrapani have developed a teaching and retreat center for the study and practice of the Buddha Dharma. GBF has often held their retreats there, very successfully. Bring tools and carpools with other GBFers. If you attend plan to stay over on either Friday or Saturday night. On Saturday night there will be a puja. For further information call 415 338-6654

The semi-annual training program for working with the dying begins April 15 at the Zen Hospice. With two locations and up to 30 people at a time in residence, the Hospice program always needs volunteers to befriend and care for those who are busy dying. This training is a wonderful opportunity to practice the compassion and wisdom that the Buddha Dharma witnesses and teaches. For any questions about the way of a caregiver call Howard King, a caregiver in the program for four years. For information on the training call the hospice at 415 863-2910.

Sunday May 17, from 10am-6pm there will be a day of music and grace, meditation and sharing in the Spirit Rock meadow with Stephen and Ondrea Levine and Jai Uttal. All proceeds go to the support of Ram Dass' recovery. Infoline 415 488-0164 x332

Writers published in the anthology *Queer Dharma* will be reading from their work at CODY's Bookstore in Berkeley on Tuesday May 5 at 7:30pm. The following GBFers will be reading: Lee Robbins, Daishin David Sunseri, John R. Killacky, Michael Hyman, and Mark Marion.

Foundations of Buddhism Study Group will meet two consecutive Saturdays, May 2 and May 9, from 8:30 am to 12:00 pm at MCC.

**Contributors**

Thanks to the following people who helped with this GBF Newsletter: Scott Stalmaker, Larry White, Daishin David Sunseri, and Howard King.

**Dharma Centers**

[Each center offers ongoing programs and activities. If interested, please contact them directly.]

- BSC: Berkeley Shambhala Center: 2288 Fulton Street, Berkeley. 510/841-6475.
- CD$: California Diamond Sangha, P.O. Box 2915, Petaluma, CA.
- CML: Community of Mindful Living, P.O. Box 7325, Albany. 510/527-3751.
- DI: Dzidum International, P.O. Box 40155, Berkeley. 510/849-9926.
- EGZC: Empty Gate Zen Center, 2200 Parker St, Berkeley. 510/845-8565.
- EHM: Enlightened Heart Meditation Center. 415/255-0798.
- HSZC: Hartford Street Zen Center: 57 Hartford St., SF. 415/863-2507.
- POL: Pema Osel Ling: 2013 Eureka Canyon Road, Corinbros. 408/761-6266.
- SBC: Saraha Buddhist Center, 3145 Geary Blvd. #515, SF. 415/731-5973.
- SCZC: Santa Cruz Zen Center, 113 School Street, Santa Cruz. 408/457-0206.
- SBFC: San Francisco Buddhist Center: 37 Bartlett St., SF. 415/252-2018.
- SFSC: SF Shambhala Center: 1630 Taraval St., SF. 415/731-4426.
- SFZC: San Francisco Zen Center: 300 Page Street, SF. 415/863-3136.
- TLC: Tse Chen Ling Center: 4 Joost Ave, SF. 415/333-3261.
- Vl: Vajrapani Institute, P.O. Box 2130, Boulder Creek. 408/338-6654.
- ZHP Zen Hospice Project, 415/863-2910.
“If there’s no meaning in it,” said the King, “that saves a world of trouble, you know, as we needn’t try to find any. And yet I don’t know;” he went on, spreading out the verses on his knee, and looking at them with one eye; “I seem to see some meaning in them after all...”

-Lewis Carroll

Alice in Wonderland

How to Reach Us:

**GBF Sangha:** Send correspondence and address changes to GBF, 2261 Market Street #422, San Francisco, CA 94114. For 24-hour information on GBF activities or to leave a message, call 415/974-9878.

**GBF Newsletter:** Send submissions to: Editor, GBF Newsletter, 2261 Market Street #438, San Francisco, CA 94114. If possible, include a DOS or Windows disk in Word or as a text file, along with your hardcopy. ♦