



# GAY BUDDHIST Fellowship

FEBRUARY / MARCH 2012 NEWSLETTER

## On Right Speech

BY CAROL NEWHOUSE

**Carol Osmer Newhouse has studied Insight Meditation for more than twenty-five years. She was empowered to teach Dharma by Ruth Denison, in the lineage of the great meditation master U Ba Khin of Burma. She has also studied Buddhist Psychology with Dr. Rina Sircar at CIIS. Carol is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and the founding teacher of the Lesbian Buddhist Sangha in Berkeley. Carol gave this talk at GBF on March 25, 2001. It first appeared in our newsletter in November of 2001.**

I chose this topic, Right Speech—or wise or loving communication—because it's an issue for a lot of us in our sangha. I've even been going around speaking to some other local groups, and I've been surprised to see that with all the workshops people go to on this issue, and all the many self-help books there are, on a psychological level, people still don't know how to talk to each other. And of course I have my problems too, so understanding that right speech is part of the dharma and very central to the dharma, I've been revisiting it for the last few months, so I thought I'd share with you some thoughts on that.

I also have an incarnation as LCSW, a social worker, so I do understand from that level the value of communication in the mundane world; but even being a teacher of the dharma and trying on some level to transcend some of these difficulties, I still come back to the same thing—we talk a lot. Even the more quiet ones of us have to answer our phone machine messages eventually, and learning to speak wisely is a significant tool, not just something we have to do because we communicate. Every time we open our mouths, we have a chance to connect with someone or to perhaps cause a disconnect, or some kind of difficulty, even if it was an unintentional one. Every single time. So if I really let that sink into my heart, it feels a bit overwhelming to me. I don't mean to set up any difficulty, but I do think many of us are somewhat unconscious about our speech. It's not our fault. It's a problem in our culture: even though we talk about speech being so important, we don't really, at least in my world, know how to connect in a very deep way. And so the dharma, of course, comes home with it. There's a lot of reference to speech and listening in the dharma. I'm just going to cover two places it shows up, but I'm sure you're familiar with many.

So let's just start with the precepts. I'm sure many of you know what I'm talking about—the dharma's training vows. In different traditions, they come out a little differently, but basically very central to all traditions is what they call the understanding of not harming through speech. It's usually put in the negative, not taking what is not given, not harming through speech, for example. If you go through the Theravadan tradition, which is mine, it's one of five precepts, so it's pretty big, pretty central. They don't talk about not hearing or not tasting or not touching—they say, "Don't talk and cause harm."

I've been interested in how important self-expression is in our Western world, and how aside from writing—of course if you are an artist you have many forms—but we—or most of us—have the gift of speech. If you're familiar with the chakra tradition, from the Hindu lineage and the Indian people, you will know that the fifth chakra sits at the voice. It's inter-

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esting to combine things, pile them on top of each other. The way I was taught in that tradition, the fifth chakra is the seat of self-expression. Perhaps in our Western way we misinterpret that and think it's very important to put ourselves out there a lot, but my understanding is just to be mindful that this place in our physical body is the door from our heart into the world, that when we open our mouth we express, if we're good dharma students, the truth of who we really are. So it's a very deep thing.

I don't think I need to speak too much more about the precepts right now, but it's an ethical and moral training: speech, being very careful with it and how we use it. In the Buddha's actual enlightenment sermon, when he stepped out from the Bodhi tree, he started talking about the path, the eight-fold path, and again, right speech hits us, the very first thing, in the very first sermon, how to behave, how to lead our lives, right speech, right action,

## Words can confuse, they can distort, and they can also disconnect, even without our intention.

right livelihood, you've probably heard those three. Right speech, though, is right there again.

So I think the dharma is really pointing to how powerful our words are. It also gives us a way of dealing with this. It doesn't just say, "Be good—watch what you talk about." It also gives us our practice, our meditation practice, and however you do this and whatever way you do it, I'm sure it's about paying attention to what you do and say. So I don't see a split here between daily life practice—let's call it watching what you say in the workplace—and the meditation on the cushion. As we deepen in our meditation process, we're more aware of who we are, our motivation, our thoughts, our feelings.

As we do this and communicate with someone, hopefully we're a little more deeply in touch with what's coming up for us, and how it feels in the body. In my tradition, there's a lot of emphasis on the first foundation of mindfulness, which is the body, the sensations, and I personally find that extremely helpful because it can get kind of heady, you know—"What am I going to say? How am I going to be?" But when you feel your way into speech, to me that's a safe place to be, a good solid place to be. So the practice helps us stay connected with our body, with our thoughts, without thoughts, about maybe what we're going to say. So I think then the speech or words come from a connected place, not a disassociated, fearful or disoriented place.

I brought a couple of people with me, in terms of their books. *Ayya Khema*—I don't know how many of you are familiar with her, but she's one of my favorite woman teachers. Unfortunately, she passed away a couple of years ago from breast cancer. She was a Theravadan nun, a Western woman, and she wrote several books. This one is called *Being Nobody, Going Nowhere*. That title is always a challenge for me! And she talks about speech. "Speech is based on thoughts, and if we have any control over our thoughts [see, there's the practice], if we have any control and understanding of our thoughts, we learn to have control over our speech. We become mindful of everything we think and learn, to change it from the unwholesome to the wholesome." Right? That's the general dharma terms. And then she says, "Unless we learn about speech, we're not going to have many friends." She was kind of like that. She'd zap people personally, so she's a little controversial. But sitting with that understanding led me to ask, "What is the purpose of speech, anyway? What am I doing when I open my mouth?" In a higher way, for me it's about connection—this is just my personal understanding—it's about not just saying something but also hoping that whatever I have to express will connect with someone,

and that there'll be some good connection and some good result. So a connection, perhaps, a purposeful awakening—that would be even a higher purpose maybe, and maybe even a liberation of any kind of suffering or difficulty. So, I see where she says that I won't have many friends if I don't pay attention. That's a cute way of saying something very deep. I won't connect.

So I thought I would go over maybe four areas of disconnect, ways that we tend to disconnect, and this is really from the dharma, but I'm putting it a bit into Western language. Words can confuse, they can distort, and they can also disconnect, even without our intention. How many times have you said, "You're just not understanding me; you're misunderstanding me." We say that kind of thing all the time. The dharma points to honesty in this one. I think this is a difficult subject for us in our culture, especially if we were raised in a Judeo-Christian culture with some kind of blame and

conditioning around honesty. It can get very confusing, at least it can for me. I think the subtlety of it is this. Probably not too many of us lie outright, although I have actually caught myself saying things that were totally untrue. It's amazing what nice people like us can get into, not even realizing it. But what I think is even more common is overrating and underrating. I've been trying to think of some good examples of this, again in the workplace, because I am still very much in the workplace. You know, someone asks your opinion on something or there's a situation where it's very easy for you to overrate a person or underrate a person or overrate or underrate the importance of something. Just for what? For your own gain? Or for what you perceive in that moment, in your unconscious ways, to be a benefit to you—probably not a good idea, but in the moment, a good way of getting out of something.

**GBF:** What would be an example of overrating?

**CN:** Say, how did that meeting go? "Oh, it went really, really well—I mean there were a few problems with blah, blah, blah, but basically it was fine." When in fact the meeting was horrible, it was a real pain in neck, I had a lot of trouble with this person, I'm really worried about the staff member, how they're going to carry out their duties, but it's really not something I want to talk about with my boss right now, and I've probably been conditioning and doing this for a while, if I did something like that. Now we could sit and speculate for hours about why I'm doing this—to protect myself, because it's my boss, because I don't want any problems, because I don't have time. But in the long run something like that is going to catch up with me, that distortion of the truth.

**GBF:** What do you do when someone asks, "How're you doing?" and you're feeling lousy and they don't want to hear about all your aches and pains and emotional turmoil.

**CN:** Well, they did ask a question. They asked, "How are you doing?" I mean, it depends on all of you in the minute, but I feel that if someone asks how I am, I have to do the evaluation that you're doing, but I would certainly try to give them a piece of the truth. I would say, "Fine." If I were not feeling very good at all I would say, "Things haven't been that great lately, but . . ." I'd give them an out—I wouldn't blunder into it with them. It's subtle, but I would try to go to the truth. If they asked the question, you know, what are they asking me for? Obviously, they're not asking the question; they're just saying something, but that's another difficulty I'll get to. It's called empty words and meaningless talk. Now I suppose that if I assume meaningless talk is coming at me, and I'm really sure of that, I might not go there. But then I might question why I'm in a situation where there is so much meaningless talk. I don't

know—it might be someone I don't hang out with a lot. This one is particularly difficult. I want to go to another level of it.

I want to talk about some of the motivations why sometimes embracing honesty isn't maybe the best thing, like what you brought up. In your example, what might be the motivation of not going into this with this person? The first one is self-protection, right? Maybe you're going to be vulnerable to this person who doesn't care. Maybe you're going to upset yourself by talking about it. Those are just a couple of things that come to mind. And maybe some self-protection is okay. This isn't a heavy thing. We just need to be aware of it. You know how the dharma says, just be aware—be mindful that you choose not tell the truth, if you want to look at it like that, but at least you know. So many teachers say that it doesn't matter so much what you do as long as you know what you're doing, you're taking some responsibility for it, and you're understanding later what the consequences might have been. If I realized I was holding back how I was really feeling out of self-protection, I might not want to hang out with those people very much. I can think of something even more provocative around coming out. Perfect example—we all know it well. It ranges the whole gamut within one day, probably, if we're really aware of this, to the degree we are who we really are, and to the degree we're not. So we all aren't totally honest. I don't think the Buddha and the dharma are asking to hurt ourselves. On the physical plane, we're not supposed to put ourselves in dangerous situations, so we wouldn't do that. But we also, maybe more on the emotional or spiritual plane, want to work on allowing for who we are and that being okay and protecting ourselves at the same time. This can be hard.

Let's just take another one. Sometimes we're dishonest a little bit out of greed. These are some of the basic things we're cautioned about in the dharma—greed, wanting. I was thinking right now of wanting friends or wanting to make a good impression or wanting a result or something like that. We distort things a little bit because we know the conversation will go to something that we want, maybe a relationship, even. Right? How many times do we

game. By the time it gets to you, you know the person did something a little weird but now it's like really, really awful what they did.

So those are subtle ways of seeing that anger and hatred can distort the truth, that's all.

Words can create disharmony. When we communicate, if we're not careful, we can break up a whole relationship, right? How many of us have done that? No blame—I'm just saying it's powerful stuff. If we close our eyes for a moment, I bet each one of us could remember some hurtful words that someone either said to us that are still stuck in our hearts somewhere, or something we remember that we feel really bad about saying, in the heat of anger, something we tried to take back but found hard to take back, for some reason, maybe family stuff from our childhoods. I can remember right now something my sister said to my mother that always comes up in our family—this is easier since she said it. She said, "You're just like Hitler!" I mean, my mother is 85 years old and the other day on the phone she brought that up. My sister must have been, what, 15 or something. Amazing, isn't it?

Now I'm not saying that my sister is a bad person or anything because she blew up at my mother. It was unskillful, but she was 15 and she was pissed off. My mother doesn't have the tools to move through that, and it's just sad, that's all. So if we can avoid that extreme stuff that comes out of our mouths, it's good. Thich Nhat Hanh says really clearly—I feel he cuts through so much stuff. He says, "You know, words either create happiness or suffering." Every single thing you say. So when I go in the store and ask where the toothbrushes are located, that's causing something. My tone of voice or my expression will either make that person's day a little happier—subtly—or worse. "Where are the toothbrushes?" It's scary on one hand, but it's very empowering on the other, because I think, "Here's a tool I use all the time, and if I just work with it, I can really do some good." Kind of nice. So no back biting, no talking people down—that kind of talk.

Words can hurt if we speak rudely or harshly. Now, this has a cultural overtone, and I think it's important to mention that. Most of us are studying with Eastern or Western teachers that come

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do that? I'm not going to tell him about that, because we'll never get to bed, or something like that—just to give you an outrageous example, but it's everyday stuff, and I'm not saying you're bad, I'm just saying we do it, and we should notice it.

Money, class background—those are some of the things about ourselves that we sometimes don't reveal out of self-protection or a sense of wanting something, wanting to be part of something, wanting not to be misunderstood or be subtly excluded, all kinds of things like that.

And then there's just plain hate and anger, distorting the truth out of anger. Subtle. Probably not too many of us have caught ourselves lately creating an outright lie about someone. People do this. It happens in my workplace—I'm really on the workplace today. People create slander, exaggerate gossip—it's like the telephone

from some kind of Asian cultural conditioning about the dharma, even if it's in the lineage. And therefore, with everything religious we're involved with, we have to look at the cultural background, the flavor of what comes to us through that. And people tend to talk softly, right? I mean, if you go through all of Asia, you'd find some louder than others, but this kind of thing is much more prevalent there, this kind of honoring speech. I was on a plane—I've just got to tell you this; it's so embarrassing—Japan Airlines once, and I was talking like I am now to a friend standing in the aisle. I was much younger and hopefully less conscious, and four people came up to me, including one stewardess, and asked me to be quiet, or to talk more softly, before I got it that I really should. It just pissed me off, and it was totally a cultural thing. I was talk-

ing like this—what is their problem? It was really, really bothering people. So I'm translating this into the dharma and when they say don't be rude, and don't be harsh, well, yes. But we have to understand what that means in each situation. Don't be disrespectful.

There's another example that I want to share with you that actually came up in our sangha. There are several people who are very interested in doing communicating workshops, and one of the things that they emphasize is looking into the eyes of the other person when you talk, like this. That makes me uneasy—that's just a personal thing, let alone how it would seem to other people I know that are not of my culture. I tried to share that, and I guess my skillfulness was somewhat lacking because it was taken as a criticism. I didn't mean it that way. I just meant, just be careful. In some cultures, that would be taken as an affront or a challenge, or a lack of respect. A glance, sure, but this type of thing, over ten minutes, no. So we have to take into consideration how we do this, and again the dharma gives us the tool: mindfulness. You're not going to look at someone in the eyes who's trying to get away the whole time.

The last thing I mentioned earlier was empty words. "How are you?" It can go on much longer than that. "Well, I went here and I did that, and I went there and did that," and you just think, "Oh my God!" The dharma calls that foolish babbling. Now again I don't want us to be judgmental of ourselves or anyone. People have different styles, so we have to get beyond the initial presentation. But I can babble, especially on the phone—blah, blah, blah. I grew up in New York. People talk fast, and they talk a lot. But I do want to be mindful that I'm trying to communicate something; there's some heart connection there. The dharma actually says it's draining of our energy. I even read somewhere that a teacher said it was robbing us of our life force. When you think of the breath, the connection, here in the chest center, you can see how a lot of the blah, blah, blah is a spewing out of the life force. Interesting.

I'm going to read you these words the Buddha said, again to be taken with our cultural overtone. He said this to his son Rahula, who was in training in a monastery. "Rahula! If you know anything that is hurtful and untrue, don't say it. If you know anything that could possibly be helpful but is untrue, don't say it. If you know anything that could be hurtful but is true, don't say it." We're eliminating a lot here. "If you know anything that is helpful and true, find the right time to say it."

**Thich Nhat Hanh said that if you're approaching someone, particularly about something difficult, make sure you have only loving feelings for the other person when you approach them. That might mean you never get to talk to them about it, but at least try, because basically this is it in a nutshell: good deep communication, dharma communication, really only happens when there's no sense of opposition.**

What I take from that is a lot of caution and respect for speech.

Finding the right time. Well, what is the right time to say anything? The dharma also gives us some instruction here: when the person or the situation is agreeable, right? Not going headlong into something that is a set up, that is likely to fail. Having some sense that the person or the group has an open mind or a peaceful mind when you're coming at them. And then, the dharma turns around and points to us: rather than just worrying about their state of mind, worry about your own. What about you? Thich Nhat Hanh said that if you're approaching someone,

particularly about something difficult, make sure you have only loving feelings for the other person when you approach them. That might mean you never get to talk to them about it, but at least try, because basically this is it in a nutshell: good deep communication, dharma communication, really only happens when there's no sense of opposition. It's sort of like a flow. You're not opposing yourself, you're openhearted, and the other person is not necessarily in opposition. They may not always understand, but they're not in opposition.

There are a couple of things I want to mention. I can tell you that I have found within myself that if I am going into any kind of situation with a sense of dislike of the person, or rejection of the person, it's not going to work. It might work a little, but it's not going to work very well. So I'm trying very hard. I think of it again in the workplace because that's where there's so much stress around this—to work with my own sense of dislike of someone and what they did, but open my heart to their shortcomings and see it from their eyes and do all that work, and then go there as I present my difficulty or situation. It works wonders. And anyway, you know what? I'm working on myself all the time, so it's not a waste of time even if doesn't work.

I didn't get a chance to talk about listening very much, so I'm going to go over it very quickly, but implied in all of this is that listening is a two way street. And our meditation practice helps us to listen, so I didn't spend a whole lot of time on it. Mindfulness is a listening tool. I want to read something that Ajahn Sumedho said. He is the abbot of Chithurst Monastery in England, a Theravada Buddhist abbot, and he's very articulate. This is about the listening side of right speech. "In our meditation practice, we listen inwardly and we listen carefully." So that's why I didn't spend as much time on this, because what we're doing is listening to ourselves. Some dharma teachers may even say, "Listen into the breath." But this word "listen" is expansive when you think of it—it's just being aware. So we listen carefully. "To listen inwardly, regard the outside of things as totally unimportant. Go beyond the concepts and thoughts. They are not you. Listen to that which is around the words themselves, the silence, and the space." Even in conversation with someone, if you're really listening, you may hear this weird thing coming at you that you totally don't agree with, right? But if you can really listen into what's around that, it may

be fear, it may be anger, it could be a desire to be heard, and that's what you respond to more. He doesn't say that, but that's the talking part. We need a quiet mind. That's why the practice is good, for that kind of listening.

I think I'll close with my current favorite Zen poem. It's been current for a year. I practice listening a lot into nature as well as in the sitting practice. I find that nature is an easy tool to listen into. That sense of opposition we talked about disappears. It's not threatening. I can really listen in. There's no harm there. This is a beautiful poem by Ryonen, a Zen nun who lived in the nine-

teenth century. “Sixty-six times have these eyes beheld the changing scenes of autumn. I’ve said enough about moonlight. Ask me no more. Only listen to the voices of pines and cedars when no wind stirs.” Some of you have maybe actually had experiences like that in nature.

So may we deepen in our understanding of the power of words. May we cultivate the wisdom to investigate the thoughts that lie behind them. May we find the compassion to practice wise speech

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for the alleviation of our own suffering and the suffering of all beings. Thank you.

**GBF:** What about the simple recounting of your day with the people you are close to? Like “what sort of cereal did you have this morning and were the grape nuts soggy?” There’s no really deeper meaning other than what someone’s day was like.

**CN:** I’m feeling meaning in what you’re saying. You have to ask yourself that question, but as you talk I’m feeling the wanting to connect, and it’s certainly nonharmful, not empty, because it’s you, it’s your day, it’s you sharing yourself with someone else and what you thought about the cereal. I don’t think it’s the content so much. It may seem that people babble only about superficial matters, but people can babble about very intellectual matters, you may have noticed.

**GBF:** So it’s the heart quality rather than the content.

**CN:** The heart quality or however you want to think of it. The motivation behind it would be a key. If you’re talking to your lover or your friend about your breakfast and it’s important, and there’s a reason and it has a good feeling, it’s wonderful.

**GBF:** In a parallel incarnation, I am a deeply, deeply shallow person with a whole circle of friends who every year gather for an Oscar party.

**CN:** I’m having one!

**GBF:** We have lists for worst dresses, worst speech—it’s a spectacle of unnecessary speech and overreaction to trivia. Meanwhile I got a call that in another family in my life, the mother of a dear friend is dying. She’s been dying for many years, but now she’s in the back room and in a coma. We’ve all been over there, and they’ll all be over there tonight, but it’s the Oscars! I mean, I could be very present to my friend’s grief, or I could go yell and scream about the bad winners. And I want to go to the party. This is such a profound challenge to my sense of myself that I will probably go and try to be present to my friend. I’m now realizing that many of my friends are what you initially described as overrating and overdramatizing. We all push all our storytelling into extremes for the sake of entertainment. Someone will say “heinous” when it’s just irritating, just for theatre!

**GBF:** Well, we’re homosexuals!

**CN:** Right, that’s a very good point. It’s cultural. I mean, you said a lot here. But I’ll just go for this little piece. I would really question the motivation and the result of that. If it’s joy—

**GBF:** It’s communal exaltation.

**CN:** Right, exactly, if it’s joy, if it’s dishing somebody and being exaggerated about that, maybe that’s not so—you have to look at that.

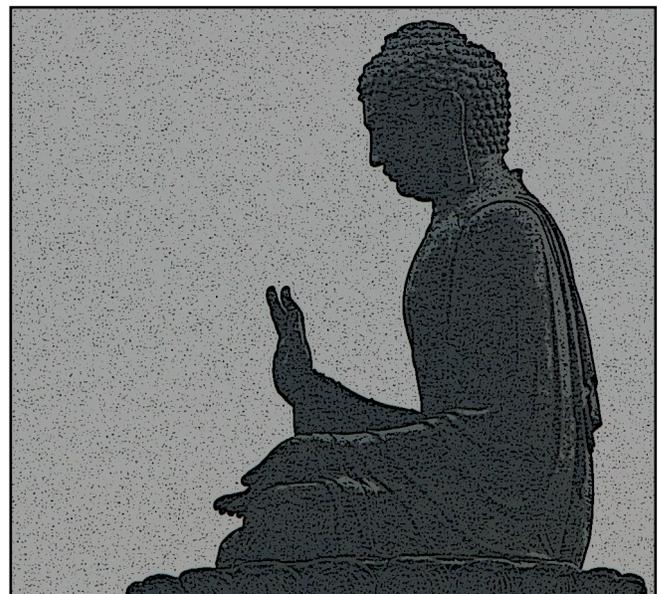
But about the Oscar thing, we have to ask why and what it’s bringing us. I have a very synchronistic, exact situation tonight. And I’m not going to a gay party with men. My girlfriend’s a filmmaker, but it’s going to be a lot like that: “Look at that, look at that!” That kind of stuff. You know your own answer. Don’t do something that’s not going to feed you. Take care of yourself. Be true to yourself.

**GBF:** What do you feel about white lies? You see a friend in a play, and it’s terrible.

**CN:** Again, I would look into my motivation. I would look into the relationship with the person. I had that exact experience, but my experience was that I was specifically asked to come, and inadvertently I was asked my opinion. I didn’t just show up and could sneak out the back door. That person had put it out that they wanted me there for a reason, so then I felt like in a skillful way I could communicate what I thought the deficits were, as well as the good things. So again it depends on what your own motivation is and what the other person’s is. If I were not asked personally, if it was just a connection, I was there in the community and something happened and I didn’t like it, I would avoid it—unless I thought I could be skillful. If I thought under the right circumstances he could really hear it and that could be really helpful, if I could figure—but if that was just too much, you know what I mean. I would let it go, personally, because it would just be hurtful. It wouldn’t go anywhere. What’s the point? Always look at the point. Is it going to work?

**GBF:** I just want to say this is probably one of the best dharma talks I’ve ever heard. It’s not esoteric, up in the clouds. It’s how do you apply Buddhist dharma to your everyday life in a skillful and compassionate way. This is what Buddhism is all about, and I want to thank you for a really great talk.

**CN:** Thank you.



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# Calendar

## Sunday Sittings

### 10:30 am to 12 noon

Every Sunday at 10:30am we meditate together for 30 minutes, followed by a talk or discussion till 12 noon. Everyone is then welcome to stay and socialize over refreshments till approximately 12:30, after which those who are interested usually go somewhere local for lunch. Our sittings are held at the San Francisco Buddhist Center, 37 Bartlett Street (Look for the red door near 21st St between Mission and Valencia Streets)

**MUNI:** 14 Mission or 49 Van Ness-Mission, alight at 21st St, walk 1/2 block **BART:** 24th and Mission, walk 3 1/2 blocks **PARKING:** on street (meters free on Sundays) or in adjacent New Mission Bartlett Garage. The Center is handicapped accessible.

## Sunday Speakers

### February 5 Kevin Griffin

Kevin Griffin is the author of *One Breath at a Time: Buddhism and the Twelve Steps* and *A Burning Desire: Dharma God and the Path of Recovery*. A longtime Buddhist practitioner and 12 Step participant, he is a leader in the mindful recovery movement and one of the founders of the Buddhist Recovery Network.

### February 12 Open Discussion

### February 19 Larry Robinson

Larry Robinson has been practicing meditation since 1969. He is a student of both Zen (Diamond Sangha lineage with John Tarrant) and Vipassana (through Spirit Rock). He is a retired psychotherapist whose work focused on ecopsychology. Larry has served on the Sebastopol City Council since 1998, including two terms as mayor. His passion is the restoration of the oral tradition of poetry.

### February 26 Dharma Duo Gary Ost and John Macalyea

### March 4 The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence—Spirit Incarnate

Since their first appearance in San Francisco on Easter Sunday, 1979, the Sisters have devoted themselves to community service, ministry to those on the edges, and to promoting human rights, respect for diversity, and spiritual enlightenment. As the original holy card spelled out the group's mission: "SPI is an Order of gay male nuns devoted

to the promulgation of universal joy and the expiation of stigmatic guilt." Not simply an exercise in camp, the Order brings together a variety of spiritual practices in a communal forum that benefits the community as it advances the varied practices of the individuals. The Sisters believe all people have a right to express their unique joy and beauty and use humor and irreverent wit to expose the forces of bigotry, complacency and guilt that chain the human spirit. A small group of Sisters, including at least one member of the GBF sangha, will discuss their mission and experiences in and out of habit.

### March 11 Dharma Talk with Baruch Golden and David Lewis

Baruch Golden has been a sangha member of GBF since 2000. He is a long-time practitioner and hospice RN. He teaches mindfulness in elementary and middle schools with the Mindful Schools Program. He volunteers teaching meditation and yoga in the San Francisco Jail and at Spirit Rock Meditation Center in the Family Program. He is currently in the Community Dharma Leaders Program, a two-year Spirit Rock program to help develop community dharma leaders.

David Lewis has been on the dharma path for forty years and has a degree in comparative religious studies. He attended his first retreat in the Tibetan Shambhala tradition at the age of 17, and has been practicing Vipassana meditation since moving to San Francisco 25 years ago. For the past five years, he has been studying dharma and practicing intensively. David is a graduate of Spirit Rock Meditation Center's Dedicated Practitioners Program and will be joining the teaching team for a Spirit Rock retreat this spring.

### March 18 Open Discussion

### March 25 Carol Newhouse

Carol Osmer Newhouse has studied Insight Meditation for more than twenty-five years. She was empowered to teach Dharma by Ruth Denison, in the lineage of the great meditation master U Ba Khin of Burma. She has also studied Buddhist Psychology with Dr. Rina Sircar at CIIS. Carol is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and the founding teacher of the Lesbian Buddhist Sangha in Berkeley.

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by the *power* and truth of this *practice*, may all beings have happiness and the causes of happiness, may all be free from *sorrow* and the causes of *sorrow*, may all never be separated from the sacred happiness which is without *sorrow*, and may all live in equanimity, without too much attachment or too much aversion, and live believing in the equality of all that lives.

—GBF dedication of merit