

SOUTHERN INSIGHT

Newsletter of Southern Insight Meditation, Christchurch, New Zealand

Newsletter 47

November 2013

UPCOMING MEDITATION RETREATS 2013-2014

All retreats are suitable for both new and experienced meditators and are accessible to people of any or no religious affiliation. The cost of each retreat covers all food and accommodation. Teachers receive donations.

Awakening Joy Pre Xmas 1 day retreat Saturday 21st December \$35*
With James & Jane Baraz Christchurch (Mary Potter Centre)
We are very fortunate to welcome James & Jane Baraz (from California) to Christchurch for a one-day pre-Xmas workshop. James Baraz has been teaching mindfulness meditation since 1978 and the *Awakening Joy* course since 2003. He is co-author of *Awakening Joy: 10 Steps to Happiness*, a book based on the course. This event is already booking up and places will be limited. To register call Sarah on 027 6693 825, or E-mail Southern.Insight.Meditation@gmail.com

Open heart Open mind Summer Retreat⁺ Friday 24th Jan^{evening} - Friday 31st Jan^{midday} \$280*(140)
With Subhana Barzagli, & Jeremy Logan Staveley Camp
An open heart and open mind cultivates an awareness and clarity that is available in each precious moment and a profound ease and connection with all of life. The retreat offers an ideal opportunity for established meditators to deepen their practice. Those new to meditation can experience a valuable and gentle introduction to silent meditation and the dharma teachings in a welcoming supportive environment. For more information call Di on 03 338 7070. To register phone Paul on 03 381 0444 or E-mail Southern.Insight.Meditation@gmail.com.
+Note a weekend option is available for limited numbers (Friday 24th – Sunday 26th January) – cost \$110

Half day- non-residential retreats: (TBC) March, June & August 2014 **Christchurch**
We will be running more of these popular half day retreats — a chance to take a break in the midst of business and to connect with what the practice of meditation can really bring to our lives. Go to our website, or register for local update E-mails to find out more. <http://Southern-insight.org.nz>

Mindfulness contemplation and insight – a Day long retreat May 31st 2014 TBC
We heartily welcome back Sharda Rogell – a teacher and practitioner of great experience and wisdom who has dedicated her life to helping people along the path of compassion and insight. More details will be available on our website in early 2014. <http://Southern-insight.org.nz>

The closing date for registration is one week before the retreat starts. Information about registration is inside the back cover of the newsletter.

Costs: Retreat costs are set to be as affordable as possible and longer retreats include a sliding scale: See also “top up” fund information in this newsletter. ***Sliding scale:** *the actual cost of the retreat is the higher amount, however it is possible to pay a subsidised rate, for those on limited income, anywhere from the actual cost down to the bracketed figure. See also “top up” fund information in this newsletter.*

Southern Insight Meditation is a non-profit, non-sectarian group run by volunteers with the aim of making available the teachings and practice of Insight (Vipassana) Meditation through retreats, courses and talks. Our website is <http://Southern-insight.org.nz>



*There are things you can't reach. But
You can reach out to them, and all day long.*

*The wind, the bird flying away. The idea of
god.*

*And it can keep you busy as anything else,
and happier.*

*I look; morning to night I am never done with
looking.*

*Looking I mean not just standing around, but
standing around
As though with your arms open.*

— Mary Oliver

Future retreat events:

Dharma Gathering - January 2015

Plans are underway to run our fourth Dharma Gathering event. This is offered by Southern Insight in conjunction with the Diamond Sangha Zen Tradition. The format of the Dharma Gathering melds meditation with more interactive practices – workshops, bodywork, poetry, art, movement, debate and discussion. The event has been very popular – so look out for it again in early 2015.

Enquiries:

Southern.Insight.Meditation@gmail.com

Southern Insight Meditation is a non-profit, non-sectarian group run by volunteers with the aim of making available the teachings and practice of Insight (Vipassana) Meditation through retreats, courses and talks.

We are also a charitable trust and donations are tax exempt. Our website is <http://Southern-insight.org.nz>

Greetings all,

Here we are again winding down the end of one year and moving on to the next. It's surprising but it seems to take a lot of effort – just flipping that one month of the Calendar. This year Southern Insight has events to help with both aspects of the challenge - the ending and the starting out. To bring 2013 joyfully to a close and to begin 2014 with great clarity and purpose.

In December James and Jane Baraz offer a one day workshop on 'Awakening Joy'. Running the weekend before Xmas this could be perfect timing for slowing down the clamor that often happens at this time of year – letting us enjoy and welcome this season just like any other. This workshop is already very popular and spaces are limited so check out details in this newsletter for registering.

In January we begin the year with a week long retreat led by Subhana Bazarghi and Jeremy Logan. Both are tremendously gifted teachers as well as generous supporters, friends and guides of Southern Insight over the years. Give yourself the New Year's gift of a weeklong retreat with these two remarkable teachers. This could transform your whole year!

This newsletter has more information about our upcoming retreats as well as articles, poems and details about how to connect through southern insight's newsletter, Facebook and website.

In joy - enjoy



*Sitting Group in Christchurch – takes
a break over Xmas & New Year*

*Last Sit 2013 – Wednesday 18th December
First Sit 2014 – Wednesday 8th January*

All welcome



Celebrate endings, for they precede new beginnings.

Jonathan Lockwood Huie



Awakening Joy With James & Jane Baraz

Pre-Xmas – 1 day retreat/workshop
Saturday 21st December

Cost: \$35

Venue: Mary Potter Centre, 442 Durham Street, Christchurch

Registration essential:

E-mail:

Southern.Insight.Meditation@gmail.com

or Tel: Sarah 027 6693 825



Open Heart Open Mind

With Subhana Bazarghi &
Jeremy Logan

Friday 24th Jan^{evening} - Friday 31st Jan^{midday+}

Cost: \$280*.

Venue: Stavely Camp

Insight meditation allows us to examine and transform the habitual limited patterns of mind that create confusion, anxiety, reactivity and suffering. The Dharma teachings, practices of mindfulness and the spirit of inquiry, cultivate insight into the true nature of the open heart-mind, which is essentially free, intrinsically empty, naturally radiant and ceaselessly responsive. An open heart and open mind cultivates an awareness and clarity that is available in each precious moment and a profound ease and connection with all of life.

The retreat offers an ideal opportunity for established meditators to deepen their practice. Those new to meditation can experience a valuable and gentle introduction to silent meditation and the dharma teachings in a welcoming supportive environment.

For further information contact Di on 338 7070 or email

To register phone Paul on 03 381 0444 or E-mail Southern.Insight.Meditation@gmail.com. Or check out registration forms and information on our website <http://Southern-insight.org.nz> **+Note a weekend option is available for limited numbers** (Friday 24th – Sunday 26th January) – cost \$110

++sliding scale is available down to \$140 for full week. "Top up fund" also available. Please ask.

About the teachers:

Subhana Barzaghi is an Insight and Zen meditation teacher with over thirty years' experience in Buddhist meditation. She is a guiding teacher for Blue Gum Sangha and the Sydney Zen Centre. Subhana regularly leads Insight and Zen retreats in Australia and overseas and has a psychotherapy practice in Sydney. (www.subhana.com.au)

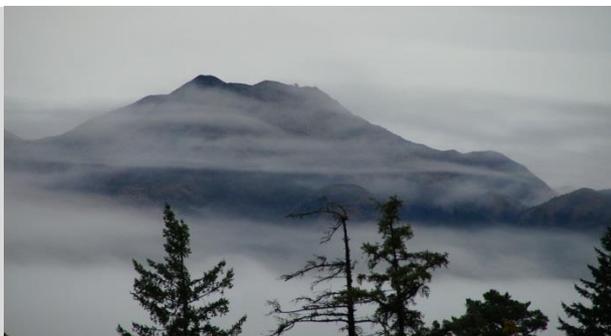
Jeremy Logan has been involved in insight meditation for the last twenty-three years, spending several years in the East and in Europe learning and practicing meditation. He has been teaching retreats since 1991 in New Zealand and has taught in India. He lives in the Wairarapa, working as a counsellor and facilitating Stopping Violence programmes for men.

Give yourself the gift of beginning 2014 on retreat....

Last year I took a week of my summer vacation to go on retreat with Yanai Postelnik. It was a gift. An extraordinary start to my year. I could not have known how much I needed this beginning. I could not have known how much it held together my whole year.

One precious week. One long year.

Meg



**In this intimacy
Nothing is answered
Yet questions dissolve
Without trace**

~ Martin Aylward

A Three Dog Life – a memoir by Abigail Thomas

At the age of 58, as the result of an accident, Abigail Thomas finds herself facing life with a husband who has no capacity for memory, who has lost all sense of past and future, and who is left only with the present. This is a book about facing the grief of loss with courage, of finding new ways to live, and of making the most of the opportunities one is given. The title refers to an Australian aboriginal custom of sleeping with their dogs for warmth on cold nights, the coldest being a "three dog night". The words on the cover sum up the spirit of the book nicely: "You might not find meaning in disaster, but you might, with effort, make something useful of it." This inspiring idea and the honesty and beauty of her writing make this a life-affirming and thought-provoking read for anyone who is interested in looking deeply into themselves and considering what it means to truly accept and work with what life presents us.

Here is what she has to say on letting go of trying to reach or control the future, and instead, releasing into the uncertainty of 'now':

"When I was young, the future was where all the good stuff was kept, the party clothes, the pretty china, the family silver, the grown-up jobs. The future was a land of its own, and we couldn't wait to get there. Not that youth wasn't great, but it came with disadvantages; I remember the feeling I was missing something really good that was going on somewhere else, somewhere I wasn't. I remember feeling life passing me by. I remember impatience. I don't feel that way now. If something interesting is going on somewhere else, good, thank god, I hope nobody calls me. Sometimes it's all I can do to brush my teeth, toothpaste is just too stimulating.

The future was also the place where the bad stuff waited in ambush. My children were embarking on their futures in fragile vessels, and I trembled. I wanted to remove obstacles, smooth their way, I wanted to change their childhoods. I needed to be right all the time, I wanted them to listen to me, learn from my mistakes, and save themselves a lot of grief. Well, now I know I can control my tongue, my temper, and my appetites, but that's it. I have no effect on weather, traffic, or luck. I

A Simple but Powerful Way to Kick the Worry Habit

By Abby Seixas

Worry often gives a small thing a big shadow."

~Swedish proverb

I'm a worrier by nature, and I come by it honestly.

My mother was afraid to cross bridges, and ride in elevators, boats, and airplanes. Her mother died of cancer at the age of 40, and my mother spent many years—including those of my childhood—thinking every sniffle, fever, or headache might be the start of something fatal.

Although I didn't realize it at the time, growing up with a steady dose of anxiety, like an invisible intravenous drip, had its effect on my developing mind.

I was an introverted, timid child. Afraid of the boys who threw snowballs, afraid of steep ski trails, afraid of not getting A's in every subject, all the time. A lot of my anxiety got channeled into perfectionism, and—just like my mother—trying to control pretty much everything.

The gift in my anxiety was a distinct drive to find peace. That quest led me to meditation at the tender age of 19.

That was more than forty years ago. I was young and naïve, and really had no idea what I was doing (the belief that I could banish worry forever being just one indication of my naiveté). But, I persisted—and when I lost the thread of practice, I always eventually came back to it.

Here's one thing I've learned in 40-some years of meditation and awareness practice: there is a great deal that I'm not aware of. Still.

That could be discouraging, and sometimes it is. But, what keeps me on this path, what keeps me meditating and working to bring the light of mindful attention to the dark places in my mind and life, are the new awarenesses, the small

victories I feel in moments when something that was unseen is all at once seen.

There is a thrill in that, not perhaps like the thrill of speeding down a black diamond trail, or any of those other physical challenges I've always been afraid of, but a thrill just the same.

One day, not too long ago, I was driving to a train station to leave my car in a long-term lot while I visited New York for a few days. I had never been to this lot and as I drove, I was feeling the pressure of needing to find the lot, find a spot, and not miss the train.

That feeling of pressure isn't unusual when I have a deadline such as a train to catch. But this time, for some reason, I became more acutely aware of a subtle layer of physical and emotional tension. Just as I often do on the meditation cushion, I began to bring the feeling of tension more fully into awareness and to investigate it as I was driving.

Here's what I saw:

1. I was facing an unknown (inconsequential as it was), which triggered anxiety because the unknown is impossible to control.
 2. My feelings were telling me a lie, that is, that this unknown situation had life-or-death consequences.
- And most importantly:
3. How I was relating to the unknown of not being sure about where to park and how long it would take, this is how I relate to all unknowns in my life, large and small. That is, I approach the unknown with an underlying assumption that was completely unconscious until that moment: "It Won't Work Out."

Because I had become aware of it, I was able to question the assumption. I remembered Pema Chodron's description of a traditional Tibetan Buddhist teaching, from *Start Where You Are: A Guide to Compassionate Living*: "train in the three difficulties." The first "difficulty" is to see your unhelpful patterns of thought and behavior. The second is to "do something different." The third is to continue doing that different thing.

So, I asked myself, "What if I tried something different, and assumed it most likely would work

out?” (That is, I would find the lot, be able to find a parking spot, and get to the train on time.) I tried to coax my brain toward this idea, and to resist the considerable energy drawing it back to the habitual, well-worn track of “It Won’t Work Out.”

It felt strange, driving toward the station with the idea that finding parking and getting to the train was workable. I mean “strange” the way crossing your legs the opposite way from how you usually do feels strange. Not bad, really, but unfamiliar, foreign.

But not too long after it felt strange, it felt incredibly liberating. Just as assuming “It Won’t Work Out” is a pretty sure bet to breed anxiety, approaching an unknown with the assumption that it’s going to be workable is likely to induce at least some degree of calm and equanimity.

And it did. My shoulders relaxed, my breathing deepened, and I felt a kind of mental brightening, as if a foreboding storm cloud had unexpectedly lifted.

I’d like to say that was the moment when I cast aside the worn-out assumption that “It Won’t Work Out” and replaced it—forevermore—with “It’s All Workable.” Well, suffice it to say, I’m still working on the third difficulty: “Continue in that new way.”

But that’s okay with me now, in a way it wouldn’t have been four decades ago. Instead of feeling impatient to get rid of that worry-driven assumption, I [feel grateful](#) that I became aware of it.

And to me, that kind of awareness, arising seemingly spontaneously, is the fruit of meditation and whatever other ways we work to wake up. However imperfectly we make that effort, it does make a difference over time.

Contrary to the incessant messages from our turbo-charged culture, here’s another piece of wisdom I’ve gleaned in 40-some years of meditating and 60-some years of life: most change happens bit by bit, one small “aha” at a time, with lots of practice in between.

And there’s joy to be had—in each of those small awakenings, and in the winding path we walk toward the unknown, illuminated by the light of one humble, thrilling realization after another.

(By the way—no surprise—I did find the lot and a parking space, and got to the train with plenty of time. It did work out.)

This article – along with many other great resources can be found at the website “tiny Buddha” <http://tinybuddha.com>

The blue sky stretches out further and further

**The daily sense of failure goes away
The damage I have done to myself
fades**

**A million suns come forth with light
When I sit, firmly, in that world**

Kabir

Christchurch Sitting Group



Wednesdays 7.30pm – 9.15pm

Our “two venue” format for Sitting Group is working well. All are welcome to join us.

First Weds of the month:	Ferndale School
Second Weds of the month	Opawa Zendo
Third Weds of the month	Ferndale School (facilitated session)
Fourth Weds of month:	Opawa Zendo

If there are **five Wednesday’s** in a month – the default for the 5th Wednesday will be Ferndale School.

Addresses:

Ferndale School 104 Merivale Lane, staffroom
Opawa Zendo 4 Kennedy Place, (off Opawa Rd)

Southern Insight Steering Group

The steering group has 6 people who volunteer their time to run the organisational end of southern insight. There is also a number of folk out there who help us in many ways – thanks very much to all of you. If you feel you would like to get more involved – there are lots of little (and medium sized) jobs that we would very much appreciate a hand with. It is a tremendous group of people – very welcoming!

If you have any questions about retreats or other events, or would like to get more involved —here are the contact details of the Steering group, all of whom would be happy to talk with you:

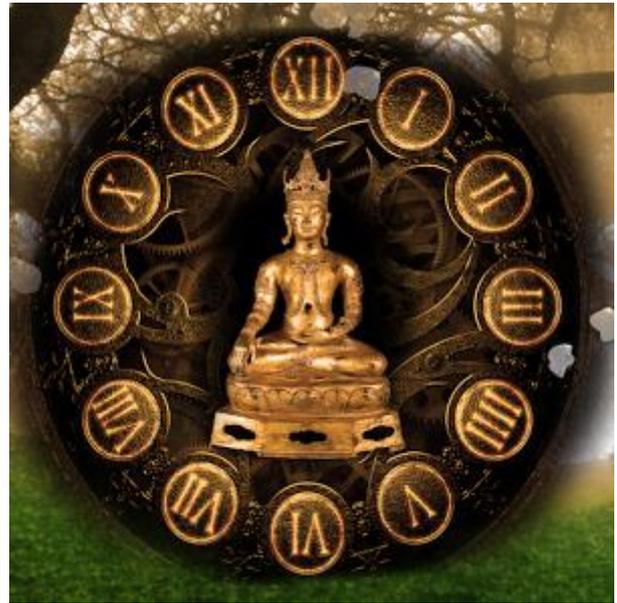
Di 338 7070
Meg 328 8052
Dermot 381 4617
Rachel 382 2019
Sarah 027 669 3824
Chrys 338 0313

E-mail: southern.insight.meditation@gmail.com



People travel to wonder at the height of mountains, at the huge waves of the sea, at the long courses of rivers, at the vast compass of the ocean, at the circular motion of the stars; and they pass by themselves without wondering.

—St Augustine



What Time is it?

At this moment if you set the alarm to get up at 3.47 this morning and when the alarm rings you get up and turn it off and say: What time is it? You'd say:

Now. Now

Where am I?

Here! Here!

Then go back to sleep.

Get up at 9am tomorrow. Where am I?

Here!

What time is it?

Now!

Try 4.32 three weeks from next Thursday.

By God

It is – there is no getting away from it –

That's the way it is

That's the

Eternal present.

You finally figure out that it's only the Clock that's going around...

It's doing its thing but you – you're sitting

Here

Right Now

Always.

—Ram Dass

Getting our newsletter and hearing about local events

If you did not receive this newsletter by mail and would like to be on our mailing list, please phone Dermot on (03) 381 4617. Any donation towards the cost would be appreciated.

Get it by e-mail!

In addition to the regular mail-out of the newsletter we send out the newsletter as a PDF attached to E-mail. If you think you would like to be on our e-mail newsletter circulation list all you need to do is send an e-mail to Southern.Insight.Meditation@gmail.com with the words "**subscriber**" in the title.

If you would like to replace your hard copy with this E-version – include your name and address in the body of the e-mail and state "**remove from hard copy list**".

Hear about local events!

If you would also like to go on [the local sangha contact list](#) to receive updates of local events in the Christchurch area – also state "**add to local list**" in the e-mail.

Unsubscribe

If at any time you want to be removed from our e-mail contact list – just send us an e-mail with the words "unsubscribe" in the title.

Retreat Booking Procedures

Please phone **Paul** on **381 0444** for a retreat registration form – or download a form from our website. <http://Southern-insight.org.nz>

The completed form and a deposit of \$50.00 should be sent to 6 Trent St, Linwood, Christchurch.

Stamped addressed envelopes are appreciated when booking. Further information will be sent to you on receipt of your deposit. Please note that retreats will only run if there are sufficient registrations.

Please make cheques payable to **Southern Insight Meditation.**

Online payment instructions

The account to pay into is Southern Insight Meditation... [.ASB] **12-3148-0078078-00**

When paying online please use the following format:

In the *Particulars* box put the initials of the teacher followed by "rt" and the year (e.g. YP rt2013 for Yanai Postelnik retreat).

In the *Code* box put how many people are included in the retreat deposit (e.g. 1 person). In the *Reference* box put your name

E.g.

Particulars	Code	Reference
YP RT 2013	2 people	J Smith

Please note on your registration form that you have paid your deposit online and state the amount you have paid.

Refunds of Deposits

The deposit for retreats is refundable up to the closing date of the retreat booked, less a \$5.00 charge for administration costs. Deposits cannot be refunded after the retreat closing date, and the money will be put into the Top-Up Fund.

Top Up Fund

The top-up fund is for those who are unable to afford the cost of a retreat. Southern Insight aims to make retreats as accessible as possible to all, and it is possible to pay less than the lower amount in the sliding scale for a retreat. We encourage people to make use of this fund, which, thanks to the generosity of others who attend our retreats, is currently in a healthy state.

Location

Our retreats are generally held at Staveley campsite at the foot of Mt Hutt. This is approximately 1.5 hours south west of Christchurch. For directions see our website

Contact Details for Southern Insight

E-mail: southern.insight.meditation@gmail.com

Post: 16 Ward Street, Christchurch

Website: <http://southern-insight.org.nz>

E-mail is generally checked weekly. For a more immediate response call one of the numbers of the steering group members listed above.

If undelivered, please return to:
13 Dacre Street
Christchurch

