



From The Zen Studies Society Board

The Board has continued its work of recreating Zen Studies Society as a fully functioning organization whose practices conform to the highest standards for a nonprofit. We have been guided in this effort by An Olive Branch and by our own research into best practices for boards of directors.

Our accomplishments have included the revision and adoption of new bylaws, establishing operating committees (such as Governance, Development, Membership, and Publicity and creating a membership protocol, soon to be announced) for the organization as a whole. This year we have retooled our information systems, taking advantage of software that automates processes, and revising the structure of record-keeping.

Reporting is now more easily available for the two temples and for the Endowment Fund, and processes that have been carried out by outside vendors can be performed in the DBZ office at lower expense. Both the year-end 2013 fundraising appeal and the upcoming membership drive will be easier on all sides because of improved automation.

Also, this year, the 2012 financial data was reviewed, prepared, and submitted to Citrin Cooperman, a nationally recognized accounting firm, for an audit. The preparation portion of this project helped us to standardize and improve our accounting practices. The audit results will be available on our web site soon.

In November (the morning after the close of Harvest Sesshin!), the Board met to discuss strategic planning for the near- and long-term. The discussion and planning sessions included fund-raising, membership, and critical issues such as energy conservation and engagement with local communities.

DBZ is creating a list of maintenance and improvement projects. We have identified energy efficiency and monastery and guest house improvements as priorities. In the longer term, we are also looking at providing improved and expanded facilities for the increasing number of guests. We look forward to defining these projects and their progress in 2014.

The Board has met regularly throughout the year, with members of our Advisory Council joining us, to achieve these milestones. In January, president Soun Joe Dowling completed six years of service and stepped down and became a member of the Advisory Council, and Hokuto Daniel Diffin became Board president. In October, we nominated new members of the Board and the Advisory Council.

Current Board members are Hokuto Dan Diffin, president; Shinkon Peter Glynn, treasurer; Jikyo Bonnie Shoultz, secretary; Genno Linda King; Tamon Jeff Hovden; Shoteki Chris Phelan. Our Abbot, Shinge Roshi, Sherry Chayat, is an ex-officio member of the Board. Newly nominated Board members are Koge Louise Bayer, Choren Karin Drew, and Chris Wolf, all of whom served in 2013 on the Advisory Council. Koge Louise Bayer is a retired finance and accounting professional who worked in theatre and in organized labor; she began sitting at Shobo-ji in 1978. Choren Karin Drew is a founding principal at LineaGraphia LLC, a marketing communications firm in Brooklyn, New York. Prior to founding her company, she held positions as copywriter and creative supervisor at Havas Worldwide and Ogilvy & Mather. Chris Wolf is CEO and CIO of Preservation Trust Advisors, San Francisco, CA. PTA specializes in identifying alternative investment strategies for building diversified portfolios by partnering with experienced hedge fund managers.

Advisory Council members are Jodo Tina Grant, Zuiho Matthew Perez, Ryoju John Lynch, Daichi Vasken Kalyajian, Eric Mendelman, Myorin Catherine Landis, Soun Joe Dowling, and Zenshin Richard Rudin. Bryan Brown, Kaijo Matthew Russell, David Pless and Karen Dodds will join the Advisory Council.

On another front, we note that the litigation against ZSS brought by the former abbot and his wife is just

(see next page)

entering a phase of non-binding arbitration. In the litigation each party seeks, among other things, damages from the other party. The Society believes that arbitration could help resolve the claims raised in the litigation, and would allow the Society to move forward.

--Jikyo Bonnie Shoultz