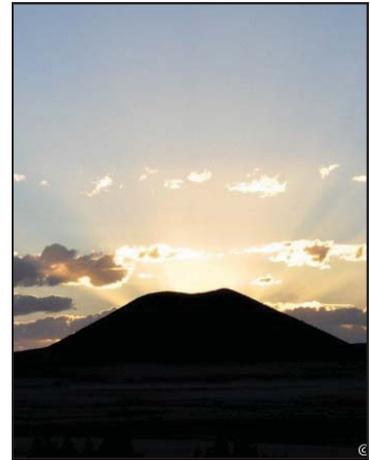




Mandala



Musings



Lori Coon

Greetings from the Director— Lori Coon

Vol. 4:Issue 1 Jan 2013

I heard a noise at an entrance in the Casa Mandala. Investigating, I discovered a little male roadrunner bumping up against the glass and “attacking” his own reflection. He, “Fred,” was advancing relentlessly with hard blows aimed at his perceived foe. I wondered why Fred was causing himself such self-inflicted mayhem when he was free to do otherwise. He had acres of open land all around. My mind recalled the Greek myth about Narcissus. Narcissus fell in love with his own reflection in a pool of water and was trapped forever.



While Fred did seem obsessed with his reflection, he did not seem at all “in love with himself.” He was fitful and clearly at odds with his faux likeness. How often do we attack ourselves – sometimes unwittingly? How often do we give power to our internal sentiments that keep us fixated on our own self-loathing? (“I am not good enough!”) How often do we abuse ourselves with addictions? How often do we let our anger and grievances blind us? How often do we confine ourselves to small spaces, small ideas of who we are, and small dreams, unable to pull our gaze away because we cannot see the bigger picture or realize we have a choice?

Thinking about the people who retreat to places like *The Mandala Center*, I realize how solitary retreats, extended times of silent meditation, and times of deep *reflection* (this is a clue) offer us a chance to face the illusory images we project on ourselves and others. When we step back and look at our patterns and behaviors we may not like what we see. When we get quiet the harsh inner voices often seem to shout louder. These may be the reasons some people resist being alone for extended contemplative time – it is scary and hard. When we are alone it is possible to lose our way, to mistake illusion for truth, and to become confused by the little mental demons taunting us.

But mature spiritual teachers inform us that *the gift* comes when we stay the course, befriend the inner critics, and seek new understanding. Instead of self-hatred and guilt, a reflection of love and forgiveness may appear instead. We are led to realize we are not the bad monster and discover that we had no need to fear in the first place. We shall discern the light of healing rising like the dawn within and around us and shall glimpse the radiance piercing through all our false defenses.

In a song by Loreena McKennitt called *The Two Trees* (a poem by Yeats), the lyrics give us a clue about it all: “*In the dim glass the demons hold, The glass of outer weariness, Made when God slept in times of old, Thy tender eyes grow all unkind: Gaze no more in the bitter glass. Beloved, gaze in thine own heart, The holy tree is growing there; from joy the holy branches start.*”

It is within our ability, if we take the risk, to see the true nature of our illusions and allow them to recede so that we may see our true natures and their true source. But there is something else about these lyrics that gives us an intimation of a bigger story. (continue



on page 6)

Letter from Operations—by Monica Ingamells



MONICA INGAMELLS

When I recently looked back at my life I had the epiphany that *happiness lives in everyday moments*. Not in grand accomplishments, titles or recognition bestowed upon us by others, in the degrees we earn or the money we make, but in the ordinary moments of everyday life. I saw the real wealth in my life in the relationships I've had and in the interaction with all people, also the ones that I had perceived as trying or difficult. Happiness lived in all those interactions and whatever heart exchanges took place enriched my life and gave it meaning. It may not always have seemed so at the time, but in retrospect it was quite clear that happiness lived in that string of ordinary days interspersed with some extraordinary ones.

Shifting my gaze to The Mandala Center and the work that we do here, I was looking for what would translate to happiness and satisfaction for our guests. People take a break from their everyday lives and they journey here to do soul work or to retreat, to get inspired or to find a little time for some aspect of their life that needs attention. It is like a pause and an assessment of where they are in life and where they want to go, a recalibration of sorts, and they leave rejuvenated to again take their place in society and in the life that is theirs, carrying with them what their retreat has gifted them with.

As part of The Mandala Center staff I am keenly aware of how every single detail impacts the experience that our guests have at the center, whether it be in the cleanliness of the facility, the food that is served, the program that is offered or in the details of the service that is provided. It is our commitment to the people who come to The Mandala Center to guard their time here and to ensure that they have a physically and emotionally safe place to do the work they have come to do.

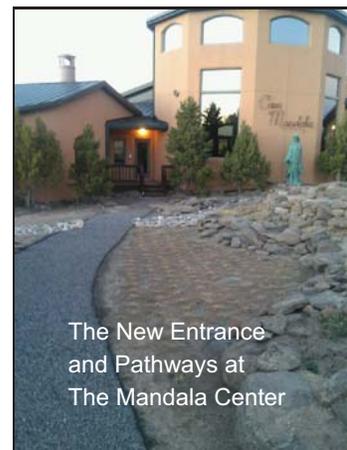
In the last few years several visible improvements have been made at the center to add to the enjoyment and safety of our guests, like the solar-lit pathways between the Casa Mandala and the guest lodges, the xeriscape by the entrance to the main building and the cattle fences that now keep curious cows off the porches and away from the immediate vicinity of the buildings. Guests have been very complimentary of the improvements, and very appreciative of the new linens and bedding that were acquired, and the names that have been given to all guest rooms.

We do our best to add little touches but we find our evaluations reflect that guests appreciate the human service element the most: having someone there to communicate with them, knowing somebody is taking care of things, attention paid to them when they need an extra box of kleenex or an extra pillow. Besides the obvious external improvements and the simple beauty of the location itself, guest happiness seems to be linked to how successfully we manage the details of everyday life at the center and how satisfied our guests are with the human interaction.

We thank all our guests for their patronage and for the contribution that they themselves give to this extraordinary place. Without you we wouldn't be here! It is a privilege to serve you!

Wishing everyone a Blessed Holiday Season, Monica

We would like to send a special thank you to Jonathan Thompson who has done an amazing job on our entrance walk ways, rock garden area, drainage area, and fences. It is a great improvement to our landscaping! Thank you Jonathan! All the guests have indicated a big thumbs up!



The New Entrance
and Pathways at
The Mandala Center

Schedule for Our 2013 Individual Retreat Weekends

SEASONS OF WISDOM

The Mandala Center is no longer able to sustain being open for singular individual retreats throughout the year. In an attempt to continue to provide space for individuals to come for retreat we have created our Individual Retreat Weekends. We have even created them at reduced rates! Our Individual Retreat Weekends offer rest and renewal without a scheduled program. These weekends have proven to be in demand and enjoyed by all who attend – individuals and couples alike. *There are occasions we also may have extra space for individuals to retreat during our scheduled facilitated weekends. Please check the workshop dates on the next page. Call us about your interest and closer to the workshop dates we can let you know if we have extra space and give you a price.* **Fees listed below are for private rooms and include meals. Please see our website for SHARE AND SAVE prices—come with a roommate and SAVE!**



Winter Contemplation

Thursday, Feb 7- Sunday, February 10, 2013

There is a beauty and grace to our volcanic land during the winter season and a snowfall can be a heavenly sight here on the Sierra Grande. Come rest and contemplate whatever calls to your heart and soul in the winter's silence. Enjoy a hot cup of tea, a book, a nap, and cuddle in to a true retreat. Our delicious meals will keep you full and happy, too!

Winter Special - Early bird price only - Private Room \$385



Spring Renewal

Thursday April 25- Sunday April 28, 2013

Let the awakening buds of spring enliven your spirit. Enjoy the spring here at The Mandala Center and be treated to luscious meals and accommodating service as you create your own agenda for a retreat of rest and renewal. What new seeds are you planting in your life? Let this be a time to plant new beginnings in your life and in your heart!

Early Bird deadline, March 11th, \$385

After March 11, Regular Fee \$435



Summer Siesta

Thursday July 25- Sunday July 28, 2013

The busy schedules and the heat of summer bring a need for slowing down and recharging our minds and bodies. The heat of our afternoons make it a perfect time for resting in the shade, napping, and celebrating siesta in your own personal way. Then evenings cool down to comfortable temperatures as the splendor of our night sky opens up to endless stretches of stars and planetary sights. Enjoy fresh and healthy meals and no agenda but your own!

Early Bird deadline, June 10th, \$385

After June 10th, Regular Fee \$435



Autumn Reflection

Thursday November 7 - Sunday November 10, 2013

The year turns as we come to the harvest season and we have a chance to reflect upon what we are harvesting in our own lives. Days grow shorter, our thoughts turn inward. Come and relax in your own way and enjoy the deep sense of retreat in this remote location. Explore the mountain, read a book, nap, and enjoy our delicious meals and wonderful conversation with other guests!

Early Bird deadline, Sept 23rd, \$385

After Sept 23rd, Regular Fee \$435

Come a day early or stay a day later with an **EXTENDED STAY DISCOUNT!**

15% off on extra nights in connection with a workshop.

Based on Availability so please call ahead to inquire.

OUR 2013 WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

Our setting and customized service provides a peaceful, supportive, and creative space for all of our workshops and retreats. You will find these workshops to be intimate, educational, personal, and inspiring. Please call or visit our website for full details, bios, links, and more.

www.mandalacenter.org

*****Prices are all inclusive** unless noted and include use of grounds, workshop instruction, private lodging, and meals. ***

SHARE and SAVE!

Bring a roommate and **SAVE!!** See website or call for all price info.



Cooking for Radiant Health with Rebecca Fitzgerald May 9-May 12, 2013

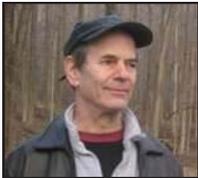
Whether you've just received a serious health diagnosis, want to lose weight, look younger, clear up your skin, or just come out of curiosity or the love of food, this workshop will show you how to cook nutrient-dense, plant-strong food that tastes absolutely delicious—and have some fun , too!.

Early Bird until March 25th, \$600 Regular fee \$650



Pilgrimage of Grief: Five Steps to Wholeness with Cheryl Eckl June 19-June 23, 2013

The loss of anyone or anything beloved sends us on a voyage into the unknown. Exploring our grief can be a very healing journey. Join author, teacher, and life transitions leader Cheryl Eckl on this exploration into the five phases of pilgrimage as they relate to the grief journey. This is a very experiential and process oriented retreat. Early Bird until May 1st, \$745 Regular fee \$795



Mastering Effective Communication with Robert Corman July 18-21, 2013

Your presence is greatly enhanced if the skills you bring to conversations generate what you and others expect and need. As a participant, you will learn advanced, practical and vital tools and strategies to help you succeed in your most important personal and group conversations.

Early Bird until June 3rd, \$590 Regular Fee \$650



Yoga Wellness Weekend: A Personalized Approach with Monique Parker

August 8-11, 2013. This retreat will help you to gain greater understanding of the classic yogic path and its many benefits. The wellness weekend includes daily classes, lectures, chanting and meditation and Monique will meet independently with you to design a yoga practice you can take home. Early Bird until June 24th \$625 Regular fee \$675



An Experience of Touch Drawing with Deborah Koff-Chapin Sept 12-15, 2013.

Immerse yourself in this simple yet profound creative process and be guided by the original founder and teacher of Touch Drawing. Touch Drawing is a seemingly simple process of moving your fingers on paper placed over a painted board. There is power in its simplicity. It is a meditative and deeply moving process enhanced by music, movement, writing, and group sharing. Early Bird until July 29th \$675 Regular fee \$735 Fees include all art materials and a kit you can take home with you. No experience necessary.



DON'T MISS OUR EARLY BIRD PRICE SPECIALS

** Do you have a spouse or friend who would like to come on retreat but NOT attend the workshop with you? Call us for prices for lodging and meals only and bring them along, too!!



Group Facility Rentals

BEAUTIFUL SURROUNDINGS * PEACEFUL ACCOMMODATIONS * PERSONALIZED SERVICE
DOES YOUR GROUP NEED A PLACE TO RETREAT??

The Mandala Center offers a unique destination for organizations and groups looking for a personalized, comfortable, and peaceful setting to gather. Our hospitality and “power of place” can compliment your programming and make your event a success.

The Mandala Center is available as a facility rental for a variety of groups in need of group accommodations for workshops and retreats. We cater to groups seeking retreat for study or experience in the areas of spirituality/religion, personal and professional growth, creativity/art, and health/wellness. We offer an intimate and private experience in a remote setting with very comfortable rooms, great meals, and personalized attention. Please contact us about your needs. We also have a new informational packet we can mail you at your request and if you are not sure if The Mandala Center is the right venue for your group, call us to set up a tour.



Guest Quotes:

Thank you very much for taking such wonderful care of us so we could focus on our work. The Mandala Center is so beautiful and I appreciate those who opened it up for groups like ours. I hope to be back soon.
– Dana

The Mandala Center has such beautiful energy and remarkable scenery. I am so grateful for my experience here. The center provides a special and unique space to facilitate healing and growth. – Maureen

The rooms were all nice and clean and comfortable. All meals were absolutely delicious and healthy. Feeling at peace as I leave the center today. Thank you for making us feel welcome and truly at home. – Phillis

You have created a blessed retreat center. – Jody

The staff is the very soul of caring, compassion and efficiency. I am refreshed & renewed. My hungry mind has been fed by the environment and conversations with fascinating people of depth. THANK YOU! We will return and we will sing your praises. – BAM

Contact us to have an informational packet sent to you about The Mandala Center. We need your snail mail address! Group leaders can receive a complimentary overnight pass for one room for one night to come and see the Center and meet with us about your group's needs. 575-278-3002



(continued from page 1)

Who is it that is speaking to the beloved? Who is counseling the beloved to gaze into thine own heart? The beloved is not alone.

And neither was Fred. As I watched Fred, I suddenly noticed a female roadrunner, "Stella," tentatively navigating the steps of the porch behind him. Was this his mate coming to collect him? Was she a new arrival in his life sent at just the right time? Fred turned to acknowledge Stella but then returned to his glass image. Stella was patient and jumped on the railing, watching. It took Stella three persevering attempts to secure his attention as Fred ran confusedly between her and the glass. Finally, Fred joined her and with one final glance behind him...they were gone...together.

Here it seemed as if love in the guise of another living being came to Fred's rescue. Stella held the space for him. She witnessed him, accepted him, and waited for him but when it seemed that "enough was enough" she called to him to come out from his "bitter glass." She interrupted his obsession with his self-absorbed place of illusion and I imagined she said, "*Here- come with me. You have been alone too long with your illusions. You have fought your demons well, but turn away because the Holy Tree is within you - fear not and be free.*"

We are talking about a love coming from and shared with God and other people. We may need to walk some solitary paths but even that is an illusion because no one does it completely alone – not ever. We all at times get stuck in our own illusions, fears, limitations, doubts, and reflections. The grace is that seldom are we all stuck at the same time.

When we can step out of fear and into love within ourselves we have the chance to help each other. We can challenge the false reflections that keep someone else focused on his/her smallest self because we ourselves have been freed. When we do finally glimpse that Holy Tree, we then are invited to share it, somehow, with others. In this way, at least from time to time, we can serve as a beautiful reflection for others of the holiness that lives in all of us – as Stella did for Fred.

May this Holiday Season and the New Year bring joy and blessings—and many happy reflections!
Lori



"Ego and Love" by Shan Zhu

There was a time not long ago,
When I in loneliness did spite,
the "me," the "I," the lord "ego".
And from that pain, there's n'er respite.

But just when hope did fade away,
And rayless hell my soul did claim,
There came someone who knew the way,
to end my bleak and baneful game.

And hate, at last, made out my door,
And in its place sat Love so sweet!
And on dear "self," I dwell no more,
For She, "this one", hath "self" complete.

For in that drear and lonely dark,
Her brightest light my eyes did blind,
And with her voice, like beaut'ous lark,
Mine heart and mind she did then bind.
For through thine start'ling love for me,
I've learned at last to care for thee.

E-NEWSLETTERS

Please help us continue to cut back on our use of paper and printing costs. If you would like to receive our newsletter via e-mail, please contact us. If you would like to be removed from our mailing list, we will be sad, but please inform us. If you wish to continue with a paper newsletter we are happy to provide it.



Together we can make a difference. No gift is too small.

Your gift touches the lives of others.

Helping us Help Others

Here are comments by guests from evaluations that reflect the blessings your support provides. We only print what is in writing but as staff we hear the journeys of guests in more depth and it is breathtaking.

The center provides a special and unique space to facilitate healing and growth. – Maureen

I came feeling alone, in darkness, I leave feeling renewed, alive and in the open. This place is wide open and it helped me come out of hiding in one room to feel like I could fly. – Susan

This is excellent space to heal, learn, and reflect.. – Edward

I feel that I left here with a peaceful mind and many blessings. –Susan

The Mandala Center is truly a sacred healing place. I learned a lot about myself and much healing took place. The center was magical. – Phillis

Today I heard a guest say, "Our last day in Paradise". Yes! I feel that way. The peaceful vastness of the land brings healing to a soul battered by the noise of the world.. – BAM

THE MANY WAYS YOU CAN HELP -THANK YOU!

- ♥ Make a direct tax deductible donation to TMC ♥ Ask your church, business, or club to make a donation
- ♥ Ask for your birthday or other celebratory gifts to be sent to TMC ♥ **Organize and/or fund a group to come to TMC for a retreat** ♥ Name TMC in your will or through other planned giving ♥ Fund a special project or item ♥ Contribute to our scholarship fund & help those in need ♥ Talk about TMC to other people you know who may give or attend ♥ Email our website to your friends & be creative in spreading the word!!

Please consider making a donation this season to support The Mandala Center and the people who journey here. We are aware of several retreat centers in New Mexico and in surrounding states that have had to close due to the challenge of economic times and the cost of sustaining remote retreat settings. We work hard to make each dollar count and to make every effort to continue to improve services, accommodations, and practices that promote sustainability and excellence in hospitality. Please help us remain viable and help us help others. Give today.

THANK YOU!

You may donate by mailing payment with the coupon below, calling with credit card, or paying online with Paypal on our website.

YES! I want to help The Mandala Center continue to provide a peaceful place for transformation and well-being in the world! Call us or send in this form. Pay with Pay Pal on our website! www.mandalacenter.org

Name _____ Phone _____

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Credit card _____ Number _____

Exp. Date _____ 3 digit security code (on back of card) _____

Signature _____

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The Mandala Center

A retreat facility that offers rest and renewal for mind, spirit, and body through hospitality, programming and a peaceful setting.

The Center is a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit organization and has a national Board of Directors.

Charitable contributions to the Center are tax-exempt as allowed by the Internal Revenue Code.

For information contact us

The Mandala Center
PO Box 158
Des Moines, NM 88418

575-278-3002

Information@mandalacenter.org



- **Facility Rentals**
- **Retreats**
- **Workshops**

THE MANDALA CENTER

A peaceful place to refresh the mind, renew the spirit, and heal the body.
Come visit and rest for a while! We look forward to seeing you!