

# Dharma Stream



MOUNTAIN STREAM MEDITATION CENTER

## Zion Center...One Year Anniversary!

Interview with John Travis by Heather Sundberg

The Center in Nevada City has been open for a year now, and I personally feel so much gratitude for the gifts of money and time that have manifested this beautiful place of practice. When I reflect on the decades of Mountain Stream's growth, I am completely astounded by the finished product, which I had no idea could actually exist.

### *Humble Beginnings*

In the 1990's we used my house for daylongs and retreats. The retreats were especially wonderful, everyone slept all over the house, with tents outside. I slept under my radial saw in the basement. The Meditation Hall was my double car garage where we sat in a circle, with the most notable part being the aluminum reflective insulated garage doors. I always wondered what my neighbors thought about the bells ringing at 5:30 AM, not to mention at 45-minute intervals. I remember one retreat, when it snowed a foot, and I had to hire snow removers so people could park their cars. Nobody camped that year. The retreats always had a

feeling of intimacy and grassroots experience. My favorite part was the intimacy of sharing in council at the end of the retreats, a tradition we continue at Mountain Stream retreats. So many in those circles are still with Mountain Stream today. We've become dharma family.

At that time I realized in order to raise my family and to own a home, I would need to expand my circle of teaching beyond our local area. I am deeply grateful for the interest and support of our initial circle of communities, including Auburn, Sacramento Buddhist Meditation Group, Chico, and Dharma Zephyr. Of course today the circle has greatly expanded. I also began teaching an increasing number of retreats nationally, and these days people in other states have relationships with Mountain Stream. Over the years, the Monday night sitting locations were held in many people's offices and homes, to eventually settle at Wild Mountain Yoga for over a decade.

*continued online, page 6*

March 2014 through August 2014

## Table of Contents

	Page
One Year Anniversary by John Travis	1
A Tribute to John Mowen	2
Braveheart by Franceska Alexander	3
Remembering John Mowen by Steve Solinsky	5
Beginning Meditation	6
Blessings and Poems	7
Schedule of Retreats	8
Sitting Group Schedules	9
Pilgrimage by Christy Tews	10
Welcome Marcia Craighead by Heather Sundberg	11
The Power of Intention by Elke McKee	14



**DHARMA STREAM**

is the newsletter of  
Mountain Stream Meditation Center,  
a nonprofit corporation.

We invite you to send a \$10 or \$25 donation to help defer some of the costs of production and mailing. If you send us your email address we can email your newsletter instead of mailing it. Saving on the rising costs of printing and postage is gratefully appreciated.

Please send generosity checks and mailing list additions/deletions to:

Mt. Stream Meditation Center  
P.O. Box 2510  
Nevada City, CA 95959  
email: [newsletter@mtstream.org](mailto:newsletter@mtstream.org)  
[www.mtstream.org](http://www.mtstream.org)

We appreciate and consider all contributions to the newsletter. Please send articles, book reviews, photos, art and poetry to the above address or email to: [newsletter@mtstream.org](mailto:newsletter@mtstream.org). by February 1<sup>st</sup> for the Spring edition and by August 1<sup>st</sup> for the Fall edition. Submissions may be edited.

Other contributions to Mountain Stream are gratefully appreciated. We can exist and continue to work on community due to your generosity. Our teachers and staff at retreats also are dependent on your dana as well.

Dana is a Pali word meaning **GENEROSITY**. Dana is traditionally offered at sitting groups, classes, and retreats to support the teachers and retreat staff to continue their Dharma work. Registration charges do not cover the teachings which are freely given because they are considered priceless. Nor does registration cover the retreat cook or manager. Donations to Mountain Stream may be tax deductible in accordance with the law.



A Tribute to John Mowen

September 5, 1953 - January 12, 2014



"John Mowen - Tibet"

Photo by  
Franceska Alexander

John Mowen, long-term Mountain Stream Meditation board member and supporter of the Dharma in Nevada County, passed away on January 12, 2014, after a journey with cancer.

During the early years of Mountain Stream, John hosted numerous daylongs and retreats at his home, as well as sitting many retreats of his own.

John Mowen was my friend as well as a fellow Dharma traveler, a life-long pilgrim, and an artist. So many in this community carry his memory in their hearts. We will miss him.

*John M. Travis*

To donate go to our website at <http://www.mtstream.org/donate.html> Thank you for your support!



## Braveheart

by Franceska Alexander

### The Northstar of My Heart

John Mowen was the Northstar of my heart, an exceptional man who taught me the bittersweet intangibles of love in loss. When he passed, I lost my best friend, lover, partner, traveling companion, and creative collaborator of 11.5 years.

He was a fighter jet at full throttle when his body took a sudden nosedive to his unexpected death. For years his lanky 6'5" stature awoke early each morning to a brisk 5.5 mile hike. His strong heart and mind enjoyed combining spiritual and physical challenges that would take him on many pilgrimages and treks over his lifetime. John had just returned from the El Camino de Compostela in Spain, walking well over 500 miles as he stepped into his 60th birthday in September 2013.

John and I met on the Nevada County Art Tour, Autumn 2002. From that moment on, we shared art, ideas, businesses, travel, families, food, friends, money, sexual intimacy, illnesses, and several deaths. Our simpatico wove throughout our shared attainments, personal achievements, and a number of severe difficulties.



"John and Franceska - Tibet"

Photo by  
Franceska Alexander

John was a consummate dissident to a conventional life. This translated as a challenge to our relationship directly. We lived in separate homes and never married. My discontent to his coupling resistances affected us as he was committed to not being such! He would not be "maneuvered" to do anything he did not want to do.

The deep love I felt for him only created a nest of frustration that I lived in for years. Yet, strangely enough, by not living together, we were continually put back into our own environment to look within our challenges, desires and needs. Our separate worlds didn't seem to prohibit our love or co-creating together. Our lives stayed interconnected

even at the continuing risk of dismantling relationship beliefs. By sharing our insights with compassion we reached a rare depth of intimacy and unparalleled respect.

When I chose to return to college after our trek to Mount Kailash, Tibet in 2008, John went back on the road to exhibit his sculptures across the country. Our time together waned, but we continued to share the responsibility of the gallery, phone conversations, and occasional togetherness.

While John was on an east coast show road trip in October 2013, he called me. He said recent lab tests showed serious problems in his liver and pancreas. His words broke my heart. I fell into

*continued online page 4*

To donate go to our website at <http://www.mtstream.org/donate.html> Thank you for your support!





## Braveheart

continued from page 3

an inner abyss hearing his voice and the dire words he spoke. I composed my heartbreak in that moment of fear to say I would fly to meet him and we could drive back home to California together. From that moment, our expanding consciousness of love grew even more. We began the poignant journey home on a rare eclipsing harvest full moon, with a shifting silent reality marking his final road trip. The skies stayed overcast gray as if to mirror the pensive emotions we felt.

This was John's second cancer and unlike the first in 2006, this one was difficult to pinpoint, to get an actual diagnosis and prognosis. The serious urgency of wellness turned immediately into pain management and unfortunately never even resolved to a treatment protocol.

I slept next to John everywhere he went, from home to the emergency rooms, hospital and finally to hospice. Under the auspicious new moon on New Year's Day 2014 we arrived by ambulance to hospice. It was a strange and disorienting holiday afternoon. The day wore a mask of bright light, hiding the drought of a dry mid-January sun. It beamed false hope of warmth upon John's

tired pale elongated features, his fragility a stark contrast to the power and strength he had only months before. His hand held mine as we entered hospice where he believed he would heal from the dark villain invaders within his body and that he would return to his home and his creative life once again.

The following 12 days at hospice were a confusing unseen battlefield. Within two days his body stopped responding to his will and could no longer communicate anymore. I felt helpless watching him deteriorate ruthlessly in the unfamiliar territory of palliative care.

John's hospice room overlooked a natural garden setting. There I created a sanctuary, bringing in a large golden Buddha we bought in Thailand many years before, a Blue Medicine Buddha Thangka we bought in Nepal, fresh flowers from dear friends, artwork, hand-woven tapestry's, altar items, his recent Christmas presents, photos from our trip to Burma and one of the Dalai Lama; I read him his favorite Rumi poetry, cards received from friends and the sequencing to the Light from the Tibetan Book of Living and Dying. I kept the music of Indian Ragas, chants and

occasional rock and roll playing intermittently night and day as I focused on keeping him comfortable in the subtlest ways.

Throughout the three months sojourn, my brave heart unveiled a bare bone internal knowingness as we lay silently together passing through moments into lifetimes and eventually parting through a mysterious dark corridor.

The swiftly moving cancer took him quickly as I sat in disbelief, wonder, trust and gratitude when he quietly released his Spirit at noon on January 12th. He had let go of his inner and outer worlds, and I let go of him and of us.

I realized I had been given unspoken blessings. John rarely gave me what I wanted, but he seemed to give me what I needed, and now more than I'd ever imagined, for together we traversed a full tilt emotional life without normal conventions. In the end what remained was a Love that surpasses all understanding.





## Remembering John Mowen

by Steve Solinsky

In January this year our community and Sangha were saddened by the passing of one of the cornerstones of Mountain Stream's emergence in this community. John Mowen, a sinewy towering presence, sculptor, gallery owner, and one of the original Mountain Stream board members died of a recent illness.

In 2004, John, my wife, Susan, and I joined forces to create the Mowen Solinsky Gallery in Nevada City. Our decision was based on a shared history of many years as road warriors displaying and selling our art in national art festivals across the country. A local gallery of our own could offer us a more relaxed, sane lifestyle, we thought. The unifying passion that bound us was our deep love of expressive art and the prospect of working directly with many of the most talented artists around. Also we both felt the mystical pull of spirit in creating our work. Many of John's pieces reflect this in the titles he chose, and his Buddhist practice was always evident in the work he produced.

So, in his last creative act on earth, it was no surprise to see his attention to the ways of the spirit. In the final days of Hospice care, his intention

was to transform his space into a contemplative shrine—hushed voices, photos of his teachers, and flowers, all under the tranquil gaze of a bronze Buddha. He was awake through this transition and determined to maintain his nobility. Of course, like the rest of us, though his spiritual intentions were mindfully set, he could also slip and be very human, and prone to the usual unconscious blinders and distractions.

One thing about John, though: life around him was never boring. He simply did not exhibit caution when it came to risking it all for his passions—travel, creative work, the opportunity to explore new vistas and terrains. As a business partner this was sometimes terrifying for the rest of us. But, it was never dull. Often there was his refrain, "It's all good." While this may be fine Dharmic form, his words were not always convincing.

I'll always be in gratitude to John for one occasion, though. We were to set sail in the Gulf of Thailand with friends on a rental boat with the prospect of ten days of idyllic voyaging in the sun and fair winds of paradise. However, I had recently had short mysterious

bouts of double-vision and dizziness, and had fears of an impending stroke or god-knows-what. In retrospect it was probably the mini precursors of the mild stroke that hit me several years later. Terrible doubt was arising as to whether I should go on this trip as planned. At sea there would be no handy doctors or hospitals.

John, in his very reassuring way, put it plainly, "Steve, we all die someday... if this is your time, then what better place could you pick to spend your final days!" These were just the words I needed to hear and somehow I was able to put away my fears, and to relax into what became a carefree, joyful voyage. John, as the sage-at-hand, had managed to set me free. I will always remember those luminous days and the beauty of that shared voyage.

Thank you, John.





Zion Center...One Year Anniversary!  
*continued from front page*

*Moving Forward: Hiring a  
Manager for the Center*

One of the people who attended the early retreats at my house is Marcia Craighead from Jackson Hole, Wyoming. She is the founder of one of our sister communities, the Teton Sangha.

I am pleased to tell you that the Mountain Stream Board recently decided to hire Marcia to join our community as General Manager for the year 2014. Marcia is someone I deeply trust, and who will be a tremendous asset to Mountain

Stream; she has the heart and the professionalism to help us develop the needed strategy and systems to sustain our center for a long time to come.

*Practicing with It All*

As a Dharma teacher, one of the great challenges and gifts over the years has been learning to not take things at face value and to see how a process is going on which is much greater than the individual situation; in a sense, taking a broader view. Mainstream culture becomes anxious and fearful due to their projections, but not for

the actual situation. These teachings are based on the fact that *Ease* and *Peace* are actually our birthright. It takes practice to not get lost in our mental manufacturing. The job of a Dharma teacher is to support people in learning to have trust and gratitude even when it doesn't look like it will work out. Certainly Mountain Stream is an example over and over again in how sometimes things fall apart and sometimes the wonderful impossible happens, and how we can stay steady and clear and move forward.



**Beginning Meditation**



**Roseville**

**Mar 11 - Apr 8, 2014**

Five consecutive Tuesdays  
5:30 to 7:00 PM

Maeve Hassett/Mary Helen Fein  
Maidu Library  
150 Maidu Drive  
Roseville

Contact 530-887-1573  
or 530-887-9400

maeve@mtstream.org  
maryhelen@mtstream.org

**Nevada City/Grass Valley**

**Apr 3 - May 1, 2014**

Five consecutive Thursdays  
7:30 to 9:00 PM

Bruce Pardoe  
Mt. Stream Meditation Center  
710 Zion Street  
Nevada City

Contact 530-277-3470  
bruce@mtstream.org

To donate go to our website at <http://www.mtstream.org/donate.html> Thank you for your support!



## Celebration

poem by Steve Solinsky

A Poem to Celebrate John Mowen, Rumi and, of course, Ourselves

Art is the expression of Spirit.

The artist is infused with a divine passion to create,

And out of that inspirational flux

a perfect mirror is cast

to reflect back for all observers,

The balance between Spirit and Form.

Beauty is the felt-gratitude arising from recognition  
of this gift of awareness from within Matter.



## A Great Question

poem by John Travis

A great question?

If only I could understand  
words of the mystics?

Understanding the nature of  
the subtle mind

would be a great inspiration.

So that all that is known

could be touched, possibly  
without words;

Touching some deep place,  
that gives meaning,

To the flickering of the  
unknown.....

Like trying to focus on the  
patterns of the wings of a flying  
butterfly.



## Blessings for John Mowen

"John Mowen was my longest-term friend in the Dharma. May his journey be peaceful, illuminating,  
and blessed in every way."  
*Heather Sundberg*

"Sending wishes to John Mowen that he may be free. Even though I rarely saw him in the last few  
years, I miss him already. His easy smile and good humor were bright spots in mine and so many other  
people's lives. It's a comfort to know that I carry in my heart the sweet residue of his presence on this  
earth."  
*Maeve Hassett*

"John, we're carrying you in our hearts, we're living with your wisdom, you've left us with your art, you've  
left us with your passion. We'll miss your dreams."  
*Stu Clancy*

"John brought many blessings into our lives—beauty, liveliness, love and warmth! Arriving at 7am so  
many mornings for meditation and breakfast and assorted adventures, willingness to help ("piece of  
cake!" said he), courage! and so many Buddha figures from Thailand and thankas into this community.  
We are grateful for his life and inspired. A deep bow to John Mowen."  
*Margo Cooper*



**Mountain Stream  
Meditation Center**  
Retreats & Events  
Mar 2014 through Aug 2014

**March 29, Sat - Daylong**

"Joyous Expression: A Day of  
Meditation and Writing Practice"  
Patricia Dove Miller  
Mercy Center  
Auburn, CA  
Mary Helen: 530-887-9400

**April 5, Sat - Daylong**

John Travis  
Mountain Stream Meditation Center  
710 Zion Street  
Nevada City, CA  
ann@mtstream.org

**April 11 - 16, Fri - Wed**

5-Night Retreat  
John Travis  
Sun Valley, ID (with a long weekend  
only option also)  
Kristen: 208-721-2583  
naturewalker7@gmail.com

**April 11 - 13, Fri - Sun**

2-Night Non-Residential Retreat (non-  
locals can stay at dharma center)  
Heather Sundberg  
Sky Creek Dharma Center  
Chico, CA  
bhakti.metta@gmail.com

**April 25 - May 2, Fri - Fri**

7-Night Retreat  
North Carolina  
Southern Dharma  
www.southerndharma.org

**April 26, Sat - Daylong**

Heather Sundberg  
Sacramento Insight Meditation  
www.sactoinsight.org

**May 8 - May 11, Thurs - Sun**

John Travis  
Bodega Bay, CA  
Bodega.bay.retreat@gmail.com

**May 10, Sat - Daylong**

"Mirror-Like Mind Reflecting: The  
Relationship Between Awareness &  
Skillfulness"  
Heather Sundberg  
Nevada City, CA  
mike@mtstream.org

**June 1 - 8, Sun - Sun**

7-Night Retreat  
Heather Sundberg  
Sierra Friends Center  
Nevada City, CA  
jenna@mtstream.org  
This is an Intermediate Level retreat.  
There is a pre-requisite of one prior  
7-Night retreat in Insight Meditation  
in order to attend.

**July 19, Sat - Daylong**

Donald Rothberg  
Mountain Stream Meditation Center  
710 Zion Street  
Nevada City, CA  
Registration info TBA

**August 9-10, Sat-Sun - 2 Daylongs**

Marv Treiger  
Mountain Stream Meditation Center  
710 Zion Street  
Nevada City, CA  
Registration info TBA

**September 14, Sun - Daylong**

Saranaloka Nuns, Ayya Anandabodhi  
Mountain Stream Meditation Center  
710 Zion Street  
Nevada City, CA  
Registration info TBA

**October 10 - 19, Fri - Sun**

9-Night Retreat  
John Travis  
Jackson Hole, Wyoming  
www.tetonsangha.com

**October 22 - 29, Wed - Wed**

7-Night Residential Retreat  
John Travis  
Oakwood Retreat Center at Rainbow  
Farm Selma, IN  
Barb: 513-542-5258

**October 25, Sat - Daylong**

Heather Sundberg  
Mountain Stream Meditation Center  
710 Zion Street  
Nevada City, CA

**Nov 4 - 11, Tues-Tues**

7-Night Retreat  
John Travis, Heather Sundberg  
Kailua-Kona, Hawaii  
Amanda Kimball: 530-723-2301  
mtstream.hawaii.retreat@gmail.com  
This retreat is usually full by June.

**Nov 8 - 9, Sat - Sun - 2 Daylongs**

Leigh Brasington  
Nevada City, CA  
ann@mtstream.org

**Dec 2 - 5, Tues - Fri - 4 Evenings**

HouseHolder Non-Residential Retreat  
John Travis  
Mountain Stream Meditation Center  
710 Zion Street  
Nevada City, CA  
You may come any evening.  
No pre-registration

**Dec 6, Sat - Daylong**

John Travis  
Mountain Stream Meditation Center  
710 Zion Street  
Nevada City, CA  
Registration info TBA

---

For the most up-to-date  
retreat information, please  
visit our website at:  
www.mtstream.org





## Nevada City Sitting Group Teacher Schedule

Mountain Stream Meditation Center - Monday 7:00 - 8:30 pm.

- Mar 17 Mary Helen Fein  
Mar 24 Maeve Hassett  
Mar 31 John Travis  
Apr 7 John Travis  
Apr 14 Heather Sundberg  
Apr 21 John Travis  
Apr 28 Maeve Hassett  
May 5 John Travis  
May 12 John Travis  
May 19 Maeve Hassett  
May 26 Heather Sundberg  
June 2 Mary Helen Fein  
June 9 Heather Sundberg  
June 16 Heather Sundberg  
June 23 Mary Helen Fein  
June 30 Maeve Hassett

## Auburn Sitting Group Teacher Schedule

Canyon Spirit Yoga Center - Thursday 7:00 - 8:30 pm.

- Mar 6 Mary Helen Fein  
Mar 13 Gale Hesselgesser  
Mar 20 Maeve Hassett  
Mar 27 Tony Bernhard  
Apr 3 Mary Helen Fein  
Apr 10 Maeve Hassett  
Apr 17 Tony Bernhard  
Apr 24 Heather Sundberg

## Board Meetings

Board meetings are open to all. All meetings held at Zion Street Center in Nevada City.

Apr 1 Tue. Pot luck 5pm, meeting 6:00pm

Please go to our website to view the list of upcoming meetings.

[www.mtstream.org](http://www.mtstream.org)  
click About and then Board of Directors.

## Dharma Talks by John Travis

John Travis's Dharma talks are available on our website. Please visit [www.mtstream.org](http://www.mtstream.org) for more information. You can download and listen to over 80 talks. Enjoy!

## Area Sitting Groups

**Auburn**  
Canyon Spirit Yoga Ctr  
538 Auburn Ravine  
Tues—7:30–9:00 PM  
Mary Helen 530-887-9400  
[maryhelen@mtstream.org](mailto:maryhelen@mtstream.org)

**Carson City, NV**  
Dharma Zephyr Sangha  
Methodist Church  
213 N. Minnesota  
Mon—7:00–8:30 PM  
Kathy 775-882-4980  
[info@dharmazephyr.org](mailto:info@dharmazephyr.org)  
[www.dharmazephyr.org](http://www.dharmazephyr.org)

Dharma Zephyr Beginner's  
Mon—5:30–6:30 PM  
Jeff 775-884-3676  
[www.dharmazephyr.org](http://www.dharmazephyr.org)

West Wind Sangha  
Methodist Church  
213 N. Minnesota  
Wed—6:30–8:30 PM  
Terrah 775-841-3921  
[www.dharmazephyr.org](http://www.dharmazephyr.org)

**Chico**  
Heart of the Lotus Sangha  
Tues—6:30–8:15 PM  
Joanne 530-895-1579

Thurs—7:00–8:30 PM  
Dharma Study Group  
Nancie 530-898-9139

**Davis**  
Thurs—7:00–8:30 PM  
Jenna 530-756-4494  
[jenna@mtstream.org](mailto:jenna@mtstream.org)  
[www.davisinsightgroup.org](http://www.davisinsightgroup.org)

Mon—7:00–9:00 PM  
and 2nd Saturday of the month  
9:00 am–12:30 PM  
Tony & Toni 530-758-2904

**Minden/Gardnerville, NV**  
O2 Yoga and Wellness  
1557 Zerolene Place  
Thurs—6:00–7:00 PM  
Karen 775-267-2424

**Nevada City/Grass Valley**  
Mountain Stream  
Meditation Center  
710 Zion Street  
Mon—7:00–8:30 PM  
[www.mtstream.org](http://www.mtstream.org)  
530-265-6111

2nd and 4th Weds  
7:30–9:00 PM

**North San Juan Ridge**  
Your Place Too  
Private home off Oak Tree  
(Call for Directions)  
Tues—7:30–9:00 PM  
Bruce 530-277-3470  
[bruce\\_pardoe@yahoo.com](mailto:bruce_pardoe@yahoo.com)

**Placerville**  
Sierra Insight Sangha  
Wed—6:30–8:00 PM  
Gale 530-621-3089  
[galesrespect@gmail.com](mailto:galesrespect@gmail.com)  
[www.sierrainsightsangha.com](http://www.sierrainsightsangha.com)

Thurs—6:30–8:00 PM  
Will Lister 530-306-7264  
[mettaphoto@mac.com](mailto:mettaphoto@mac.com)

**Reno, NV**  
St. John's Church  
1070 West Plumb Lane  
Mon—6:30–8:15 PM  
Dionne 775-771-3435  
[www.dharmazephyr.org](http://www.dharmazephyr.org)

One River Sangha  
Reno Buddhist Center  
820 Plumas Street  
Tues—6:30–8:15 PM  
Frank 775-813-7159  
[oneriversangha@gmail.com](mailto:oneriversangha@gmail.com)  
[www.oneriversangha.org](http://www.oneriversangha.org)

**Rocklin/Roseville**  
Rocklin Montessori School  
5250 Fifth Street  
Mon—6:30–8:00 PM  
Donna 916-532-6955  
Elke 916-632-8766  
[donna@mtstream.org](mailto:donna@mtstream.org)  
[elke@mtstream.org](mailto:elke@mtstream.org)

**Sacramento**  
Sacramento Buddhist  
Meditation Group  
Sun—7:00–8:45 PM  
[www.smbg.org](http://www.smbg.org)  
[info@smbg.org](mailto:info@smbg.org)

Thurs—7:00–9:15 PM  
Sacramento Insight Meditation  
[www.sactoinsight.org](http://www.sactoinsight.org)  
[info@sactoinsight.org](mailto:info@sactoinsight.org)

**South Lake Tahoe**  
Penny 530-541-1610  
[pennyfairfield@bmwmotorcycletech.info](mailto:pennyfairfield@bmwmotorcycletech.info)

**Truckee**  
Thurs—6:45–9:00 PM  
[cathynason@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cathynason@sbcglobal.net)

Deadline for submissions of articles, photos, and artwork for the Fall newsletter is August, 1 2014.



To donate go to our website at <http://www.mtstream.org/donate.html> Thank you for your support!



## Pilgrimage

by Christy Tews

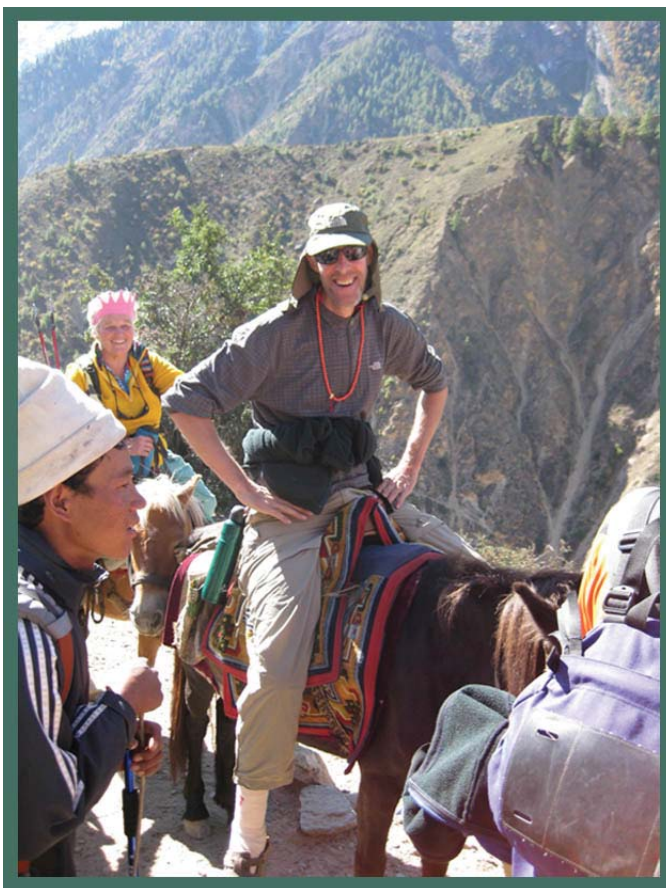
According to Webster's Dictionary, the first definition of a pilgrimage is "a journey, especially a long one, made to some sacred place as an act of religious devotion." As an act of devotion Buddhists of all stripes, as well as Hindus, Jains and Bons have been making their way to Mt. Kailash in Tibet for more than two millennia. In this tradition John Travis will lead a small band of students to the mountain in June of 2014.

The mountain is striking, standing alone, seemingly carved by superhuman hands from the stark earth and stone surrounding it. Our pilgrims will fly from lowland Nepal to Simikot to begin our walk. (Google Earth fans can see where the airplane lands by searching for Simikot, Nepal.) A ten-day walk completely across the Himalayan range brings us to Tibet, where we approach the mountain from the south. The first sight of Kailash is framed by the jewel-like lakes of Manasarovar and Rakas Tal. The view is breathtaking—partly because the altitude of the plain on which Kailash stands is approximately 15,500 feet.

On a trek in India, Rajiv, my guide, explained the Hindu task of pilgrimage. Hindu culture has several defined stages. The first is youth when one is supported by family. The task is to learn one's role in the greater culture. The second

is young adulthood. The task is to find a suitable partner, marry and begin procreation. The third is middle age, where one firmly establishes him or herself in his role and protects the next generation as they grow. The last is a stage where both men and women are freed to fully investigate the spiritual dimensions of life as they approach their passage into whatever next world there is. The task, the duty, is to diligently apply themselves to seeking salvation. This is where pilgrimage, the search for purification and transcendence, begins.

Rajiv's family was from the Punjab, on the plains of northwest India. He remembers that his large extended family gathered to say goodbye when his grandmother began her pilgrimage. Her goal was to reach the three places where the Ganges issues forth from the Himalaya. Badrinath, in the valley of flowers below the sacred mountain Nanda Devi, is the first. From there a westward walk through the lower reaches of the Himalaya brings the pilgrim to Kedarnath. Walking further west, the pilgrim approaches Gangotri.



"John Mowen - Nepal Trek"

Photo by  
Stu Clancy

*continued online page 11*

To donate go to our website at <http://www.mtstream.org/donate.html> Thank you for your support!



## Pilgrimage

continued from page 10

These sacred places are many, many miles from the Punjab. Rajiv's family felt that they probably would never see the grandmother again. Indeed, many people her age who left on pilgrimage were never seen or heard from by their families again. The pilgrimage is a strong commitment to transcendence.

In the book *"Tibet: Reflections from the Wheel of Life"* by Thomas Kelly, Carroll Dunham and Ian Baker (Abbeville Press; New York; 1993) we find this explanation of pilgrimage:

"For Tibetans, pilgrimage refers to the journey from ignorance to enlightenment, from self-centeredness and materialistic preoccupations to a deep sense of the relativity and interconnectedness of all life. The Tibetan word for pilgrimage, *neykhor*, means "to circle around a sacred place," for the goal of pilgrimage is less to reach a particular destination than to transcend through inspired travel the attachments and habits of inattention that restrict awareness of a larger reality. By traveling to sacred sites, Tibetans are brought into living contact with the icons and energies of Tantric Buddhism. The *neys*, or sacred sites themselves, through their geological features and the narratives of transformation attached to them, continually remind pilgrims of the liberating power of the Tantric Buddhist tradition. Over time pilgrimage guidebooks were



"John Mowen - Mt. Kailash"  
Photo by  
Franceska Alexander

written, giving instructions to pilgrims visiting the holy sites and accounts of their history and significance. These guidebooks, *neyigs*, empowered Tibet and its people with a sacred geography, a narrated vision of the world ordered and transformed through Buddhist magic and metaphysics."

The minute a student commits to pilgrimage life begins to change. Yes, there are the mundane challenges of getting the documents and the dollars together to be able to participate. Finding the air ticket that works, booking transit hotels, obtaining the immunizations—all are

necessary. More importantly the transformation begins in the mind. The will to do the walk develops ardency. Preparing the body and mind for the challenge requires diligence. The Buddha called for these two qualities in the Satipathana Sutta. Each pilgrim circles the sacred mountain to find his or her own experience of transcendence.



To donate go to our website at <http://www.mtstream.org/donate.html> Thank you for your support!





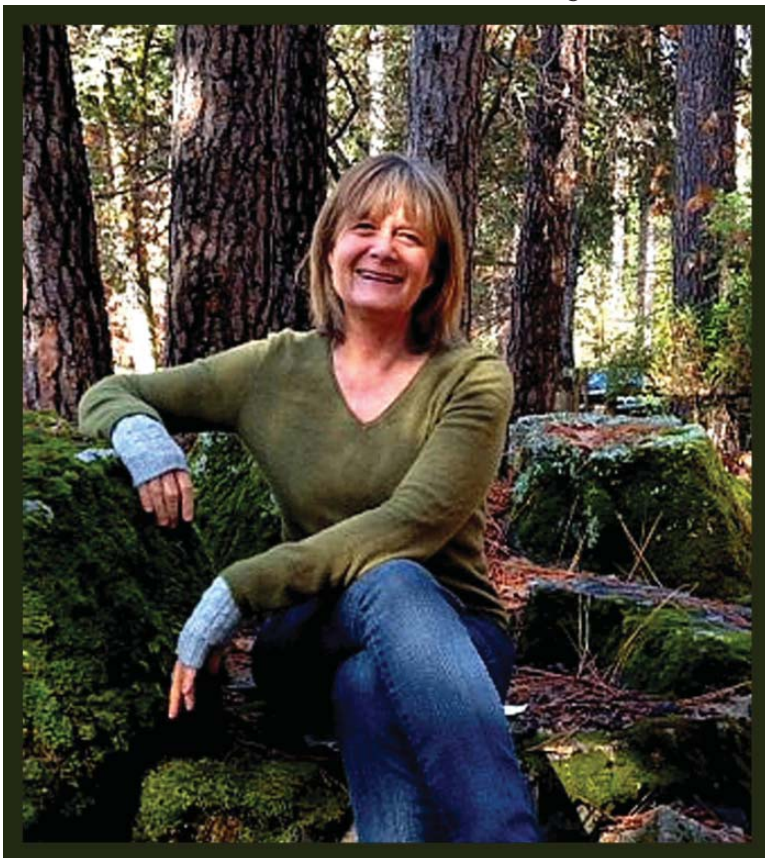
## Welcoming Mountain Stream's New General Manager

Interview with Marcia Craighead  
by Heather Sundberg

Mountain Stream is happy to introduce our new interim General Manager, Marcia Craighead. Marcia was hired because of her organizational development experience with non-profits, and she will be a wonderful addition to our community during this time of transition as we learn to operate and sustain our center. She has been connected with the wider Mountain Stream Community through her leadership in the Teton Sangha in Jackson Hole, Wyoming for the last 15-plus years. The General Manager position is for a year and we are thrilled to have her join us.

*Tell us about your connection with Mt. Stream?*

*Marcia:* John started coming to Jackson Hole to teach retreats in 1997. At that time, a group of committed practitioners and I founded the Teton Sangha. Our Sangha made a commitment to the meditation community and to John to hold two residential retreats a year plus a weekly sitting group and to assist in bringing other Dharma teachers to the Jackson Hole area. These retreats are held in wilderness areas, so we provide 'bear spray' for retreatants during daily walking periods. John's love of the mountains makes Jackson Hole an ideal environment to support his teaching style and message of liberation.



"Marcia Craighead"

Photo by  
Susan Solinsky

*What is your professional background?*

*Marcia:* I have worked and volunteered with non-profit organizations for the past 15 years. In 2003, I became the Executive Director of Teton Wellness Institute (TWI). The mission of the Institute is to empower people to make healthy lifestyle choices every day by creating programs that educate and promote well-being in body, mind, spirit and the environment. Over the last decade, TWI created events

hosting over 300 speakers who inspire and teach what an integrative, complementary and holistic approach to health and medicine is all about. For more information about TWI go to: [www.tetonwellness.org](http://www.tetonwellness.org)

*Tell us about your Dharma history.*

*Marcia:* I began practicing Vipassana meditation in 1990 and sat my first nine-day retreat in Yucca Valley in 1994. I was trained by Spirit Rock Meditation Center as a

*continued online page 15*

To donate go to our website at <http://www.mtstream.org/donate.html> Thank you for your support!





Rocklin Sangha



The Rocklin Group meets on Monday nights at 6:30 pm at the Rocklin Montessori School. This group is full of wonderful energy and is growing by leaps and bounds.

Come and join us anytime!

"Rocklin Sangha"  
Photo by  
Elke McKee



Blessing the Zion Center

Ajahn Chandako is abbot and resident of Vimutti Buddhist Center in New Zealand and came to visit family and friends in the Nevada City area. It was a great honor to have him grace the meditation hall and bless the center.

"Ajahn Chandako"  
Photo by  
Susan Solinsky



To donate go to our website at <http://www.mtstream.org/donate.html> Thank you for your support!

## The Power Of Intention

by Elke McKee

After working for Trans World Airlines for 20 years as a Flight Attendant I felt stuck with the job. Good income, paid vacations, medical insurance and free and reduced rate flights made it hard to decide to quit. The company was like a big brother to me, having sponsored me to come from Germany and get my immigration papers.

I worked the flights with my mind not really on the job. I hated to leave home. I felt my relationship with my husband of ten years falling apart. After reading all the books I could find on how to be a better person and make him happy, he did choose to have a girlfriend, and we got divorced. It was a relief for me as I had put a lot of pressure on myself for not being able to have children and make his dream of having a family come true.

At the same time Carl Icahn (known as the corporate raider) bought TWA and made some drastic changes. He wanted to reduce our salary by 40%. We were appalled and decided to go on strike. After three months we realized that the airline was functioning well with new hires that worked for minimum salaries just to have this exciting job. We gave up the strike, but only 120 Flight Attendants out of over 2000 got their job back. The rest of us waited more than one year.

This was a time to reflect on my life and reach out for new inspiration. I had made friends with two women who regularly went to Green Gulch Buddhist Center in Mill Valley. I joined them on Sundays, and I discovered the Dharma talks after the service. Suddenly I felt very interested because, when they talked about the meaning of life, I could understand it. It made more sense than any church service. I felt I had more in common with the people in these groups than my co-workers.

My two friends, who introduced me to Green Gulch, decided to invite a Buddhist nun for a day of meditation to their house. They also invited ten of their friends to participate in a day of reflecting on the possibility of life after TWA. Could we consider this being a chance to change our lives? Could there be a positive outcome to losing the job?

After talks, walking and sitting meditation our last exercise was to draw a picture of our perfect

*continued online page 15*



Drawing by  
Elke McKee



## The Power of Intention

continued from page 14

day. I drew myself sitting in a circle of children, holding the globe and telling them about the world.

The next day, while picketing with a friend, I told her about this experience. She said that her children were going to a Montessori preschool and that the Director was very nice and would probably let me observe there. The following day I called and was allowed to see the school. It just so happened he was looking for help and hired me.

I was fascinated by everything going on. The teachers were amazing, the children so open and loving. The atmosphere was conducive to bringing out the best in everyone. I wanted to be there.

I realized very soon that there was a lot to learn to do justice to the Montessori materials and teaching in a way to be most helpful to the children. I was encouraged to take the Montessori teacher training, which lasted a year, while being an intern at the school. We had eight teachers and 48 children. Each teacher had different talents, and I loved learning from them. Every day was an exciting new adventure and challenge.

When I got the job back with TWA after one year and three months, I had my Montessori credential and quit the airlines. I wanted to stay grounded and connected.

I have now worked with children for the last 25 years. I feel I am doing what I am meant to do with my life. I had many challenges with my own Montessori school which allowed me to be creative and use all my talents, many of which I did not know I had.

I believe that my realization of my perfect day made me open to the universe providing all I needed to make it come true. There is a force out there that helps you achieve your intentions once they become clear to you. Also, it showed me that something perceived originally as a negative problem and challenge can turn out to be the best thing for you.



## Welcoming Mountain Stream's New General Manager

continued from page 12

Community Dharma Leader from 2005-2008 and recently completed the Dedicated Practitioners Program as well. Since the late 1990's, I've managed the Teton Sangha retreats as part of my Dharma service. Meditation and an in-depth study of the Buddha's teachings is the foundation of my core values and is what inspires an ongoing intention to serve the dharma.

*What made you accept the job at Mountain Stream and move to Nevada City?*

*Marcia:* I have a deep commitment to learn about practicing Right Livelihood. Living and working in service to a Dharma community is a priority and very meaningful at this point in my practice. Also my long-term connection with John makes coming to Nevada City especially exciting.

*Anything else you'd like to share with us?*

*Marcia:* I am grateful for the opportunity to be a part of the growth and development of Mountain Stream. It is wonderful to be in the warmth of the California sun and its people; I don't think I'll miss the long cold winters of Jackson Hole.

To donate go to our website at <http://www.mtstream.org/donate.html> Thank you for your support!





Mountain Stream  
Meditation Center

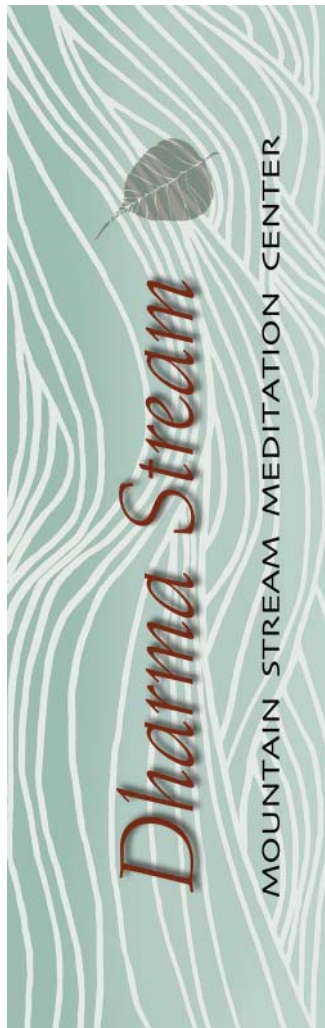
P.O. Box 2510  
Nevada City, CA 95959

[www.mtstream.org](http://www.mtstream.org)  
email: [info@mtstream.org](mailto:info@mtstream.org)

NONPROFIT  
ORGANIZATION

U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 68  
Nevada City, CA 95959

Return Service Requested



## Mountain Stream Meditation Center

is a nonprofit organization, an insight meditation community of Buddhist groups dedicated to open heart, open mind. Retreats are held in various locations from the Sacramento Valley to the Eastern Sierras. Local meditation retreats are small and intimate. They feature insight meditation instruction, sitting/walking meditation, group or individual meetings with the teacher, opening and closing circles, vegetarian fare, and dharma talks.

### John M. Travis

has been teaching meditation since 1986. He studied in Asia with senior teachers of both Theravada and Tibetan traditions and completed a four-year teacher training with Jack Kornfield. He is the founding teacher of Mountain Stream Meditation Center in Nevada City, California, and a teacher for Spirit Rock Center, a Buddhist retreat and training center in Marin County. John has a private practice as a meditation counselor and has trained in Hakomi body-centered therapy. For appointments call (530) 263-4096.

### Insight Meditation

is a simple and accessible vehicle for opening the heart, clearing the mind, and living in a peaceful and free way. It is based on a 2,500 year-old Buddhist practice which trains a clear awareness of breath and body, heart and mind, and the universal laws which govern our lives.

### Buddhist Teachings

Buddhist teaching are considered priceless and there is never a charge for them. Registration donations for events cover space rentals, transportation, food and other expenses. These donations do not go to the teachers nor staff. Classes and daylongs are also held on a donation basis. To allow teachers and staff to continue their Dharma work, support from the students is requested. Opportunities to contribute are at the end of each retreat, class, daylong and event. But no one is ever turned away from inability to pay. Contact the event registrar to make arrangements for assistance for those in need.