

**Ottawa Buddhist Society (OBS) Annual General Meeting
Sunday, January 25, 2015, 12:30 pm – 3:30 pm
Old Ottawa South Fire Hall, 260 Sunnyside Ave., Ottawa**

Present:

David Topp
Sami Aly
Peter Black
Jean Anne Murray
Chau Luong
Itza Karneef
Corinne Baumgarten
Chandra Stratton
Ajith Stratton
Elizabeth Perz
Anoma DeSilva
Rachna Gilmore
Hoa Nguyen
Heather White
Nihal Kappagoda
Subadra Kappagoda
Jack Lazarus
Lisa Gorecki
Paul Maillet
Paula Batt
Oli Cosgrove
Vivienne Bartlett
Evelyn Tan
Manuel Costa
Christine Honsl
Mark Cuddy
Colleen Glass
Jane Brown
Joan Thompson

1. Call to Order:

The Chair called the meeting to order at 1:15 pm followed by a moment of silence.

2. Approval of January 26, 2014 minutes

The minutes were read by Joan Thompson. A motion to approve was moved by Peter Black, seconded by Jack Lazarus. Approved.

3. Business arising from 2014 AGM

There was no business arising from the minutes.

4. Reports

4.1 President's Report

The President's Report was read by Colleen Glass. See Annex A.

4.2 Treasurer's Report

Mark Cuddy presented the 2014 report, which has been reviewed and signed off by the auditor. See Annex B. This report will be made available to members via the website.

Approximately \$16,000 was left in the bank account at year end. This has remained stable for the past few years and is maintained so the OBS will have some equity in case it is needed to cover extraordinary expenses. Revenue is derived from four sources: memberships, OBS donations, donations to teachers at program events (i.e. Quaker House/Days of Mindfulness/Retreats) and registration fees for retreats.

See Annex C and D for an explanation of the 2014 financial results and comparison with 2013.

A motion to approve the financial statement was made by Oli Cosgrove and seconded by Hoa Nguyen. Approved.

4.3 Membership Secretary's Report

Jane Brown presented the following overview. See Annex E. She noted that in considering how to increase OBS membership, it was realized that we can communicate a little better. Often members are making donations at events and do not realize they have not paid their annual membership. This year people will be advised if they do not have a current membership.

Increased effort has been put into welcoming people to events over the past year. Individuals have taken on the responsibility to greet new people at Quaker House. We will continue to try to communicate more and all OBS members are encouraged to welcome people when they come to events. New members are now receiving a welcome email message when they join.

Membership forms were made available and members were encouraged to indicate whether they are able to volunteer in some capacity.

Peter Black congratulated the OBS for having greeters at the Quaker House and for the one page summary about the OBS given out by the greeters. The summary was developed by OBS members Corinne and Rachna.

4.4 Social Outreach Coordinator's Report

Vivienne Bartlett read the report on behalf of Ann Waters.

Two socials have been held on May 31 at Rose and Jack's home and on November 23 at the home of Dina Fox. The next one will be at Vivienne and Bob's house on April 19, 2015.

An informal gathering takes place at the Wild Oat Bakery before the Friday sittings at Quaker House. An invitation was extended to anyone interested in joining from 6:15 pm on.

Groups of 25 OBS volunteers have prepared the meal service for as many as 200 clients at the Shepherds of Good Hope on March 2, May 25 and October 26. This adds up to over 700 volunteer hours. Three meal services are planned for 2015.

4.5 Librarian's Report

Chau Luong presented the following overview:

The OBS library currently has 455 books. In 2014, approximately two dozen were added. The two bookcases at the Tu-An Pagoda are now getting full.

It may be necessary to move the books to temporary storage when the Tu-An Pagoda undergoes renovations.

It was noted that going forward with more people using online resources, the library may be of less use to members.

5. Presentation of 2015 Executive Board Slate

The 2015 proposed Executive Board Slate was presented by Evelyn Tan.

President - Colleen Glass

Treasurer - Mark Cuddy

Assistant Treasurer - Nissanka Pussegoda

Secretary - Joan Thompson

Past President - Evelyn Tan

Director (1 year) - Corinne Baumgarten (2015)

Director (1 year) - Howard Nathan for Paul Maillet (2015)

Director (2 year) - Jane Brown (2015-2016)

Director (2 year) - Nissanka Pussegoda (2015-2016)

Director (3 year) - Lisa Gorecki (2015-2017)

Director (3 year) - Ann Waters (2015-2017)

Three directors are leaving their positions: Paul Maillet, Itza Karneef and David Topp

Monastic Communication Coordinator: Lisa Gorecki

Monastic Transportation Coordinator: Vivienne Bartlett

Membership Secretary: Jane Brown

Library: Chau Duong (and Jean Anne Murray)

Social Outreach Coordinator: Ann Waters

Two positions remain to be filled and interested individuals were invited to speak to Colleen:

Apprentice President (Vacant)

Communications Secretary (Vacant)

A motion to approve the slate was moved by Peter Black and seconded by Anoma DeSilva. Approved.

6. Presentation of the History of the OBS Video Project.

Colleen introduced the *History of the OBS Video Project* and thanked Corinne for her “heavy lifting” in working on the video.

Following the viewing of the video, Chandra Stratton presented flowers to thank to Anoma for the devotion, commitment and loving kindness she has demonstrated to members of the OBS for so many years. Jane presented an OBS life membership certificate and Colleen presented the gift of a blue silk shawl woven by a Nepalese Women’s Cooperative. A card was available for everyone to add their own words to Anoma.

Anoma expressed her thanks for the recognition that she feels she shares with the many others who have been instrumental and dedicated to the OBS, in particular the late Dexter Sampson and also the support from members of the Vietnamese Tu-An Pagoda.

7. Adjournment

David Topp moved meeting be adjourned at 2:45 pm, seconded by Paul Maillet. Approved.

Refreshments were served, including a cake in honour of Anoma.

Attachments:

Annex A – President’s Report

Annexes B, C and D – Treasurer’s Reports

Annex E – Membership Secretary’s Report

Prepared by: Joan Thompson, January 29, 2015

Annex A

Ottawa Buddhist Society's 2014 President's Report

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to work with everyone on the board this past year and also with the many volunteers, who together make up the Ottawa Buddhist Society. Thank you all for sharing your time and energy to support events where we practice the dhamma together. This is our common good.

One main focus this year was on organizing core program activities - the biweekly Quaker House Friday Evenings and the monthly Days of Mindfulness at the Vietnamese Pagoda. The OBS also organized a weekend retreat in the spring with Ajahn Punnadhammo and a weeklong retreat with LP Viradhammo at Galilee for Buddhist practitioners from all over the province.

Our lay community is so fortunate to receive the generous gifts of teaching offered by the monastics and nuns who live near Perth. Ayya Medhanandi and members of the Tisarana Sangha faithfully accepted our invitations and came to Ottawa all year round. In addition Ajahn Sumedho's Gratitude to Parents Day at Tisarana on June 21st was a rare occasion to hear his perspective on his life of devotion to Ajahn Chah and the bringing of the Buddha's teachings to the west.

OBS work crews helped out with preparations for this visit and also participated at the Vassa Araddhana in July. The OBS also offered winter clothing to both monasteries at the Kathina ceremonies sponsored by the Thai Ambassador in November. We welcomed Sister Acala to Sati Saraniya Hermitage in the fall and attended the joyful blessing of the Brahma Vihara in December 2014.

Our society was well served by lay teachers, Randy Baker and Jim Bedard who travelled from Satipanna and their lay community in Toronto during the monastics winter retreat.

Former OBS presidents Andre Vellino and Evelyn Tan led Quaker House evenings and I also appreciated Evelyn's poignant offering of dhamma at the Ottawa Aids Day Service.

OBS finances are in the skillful hands and heart of Mark Cuddy, whose company and conversation I invite you all to enjoy this afternoon.

An active OBS social service committee led by Ann Waters hosted several socials *including this one* and also organized the spring going away party at Jack and Rose's for Nalini and Ash Veramani and a lovely afternoon at Dina Fox's home in the fall. The same crew again helped prepare and serve meals at the Shepherds of Good Hope on several occasions.

Several members shopped, prepared and delivered meals to the nuns and the monastics year-round, while others drove out to Tisarana or Sati Saraniya and brought the monastics to and from Ottawa.

These core programs that we all benefit from are delivered through the *always kind* and coordinated efforts of Lisa Gorecki, Anne Dickason, Vivienne Bartlett, Rose Hunt, Itza Karneef, Mark Cuddy, Nissanka Pussegoda, Jane Brown, Chris Bradley, Corinne Baumgarten Dara, Ann Waters, Evelyn Tan, Peter Black, Rachna Gilmore and Chandra Stratton. My apologies if I have missed someone, but I know you have easily pitched in when needed.

Thank you all.

In addition to these core activities, the executive board, after completing its review, set this year's strategic goal for updating a secure OBS website and increasing communication & outreach to members and friends. Our collective appreciation goes to Andre Vellino, David Topp and Bob Forbes who maintained the previous OBS web site and Google Group list for so many years. The challenge of all things web was ably met by our Web Team comprised of Andre Vellino, Bob Forbes, Vivienne Bartlett, Rose Hunt, Jane Brown, Chau Luong and myself. Working with web developer Marco Frascchetti, of Mondodigitalis, a new site was launched in October 2014. Marco, himself a Buddhist, also delivered a new application to help me put out our bi-weekly newsletter of which there are 173 subscribers. The OBS truly benefited from Marco's generosity in 2014.

Thank you all.

The board undertook organizing and updating job descriptions, tasks and org charts to help members understand how we organize ourselves as a registered provincial charity. Our thanks to Paul Maillet for shepherding this *OBS Governance Operations Manual (Hold up a copy)*

This manual is based on what we have gratefully inherited from those who have gone before. It is a *work-in-progress which* will need updating - as Buddhists **we get** impermanence/ change. However, it's meant to help an apprentice and new volunteers better understand how the OBS runs.

Taking on the role of President was made less daunting because in 2013 Evelyn agreed to mentor me as *her apprentice*. At board meetings I met people and listened a lot. The seasonal shift of activities and priorities became apparent and helping Mark and Paul out with the strategic review exercise gave me a better understanding of the board's focus for the coming year.

Also, apprenticing gave me time to shift my family, choir and other commitments so that by January 2014 I felt ready and somewhat more comfortable to lead. I had had time to reflect and knew more of what it I could offer.

I mention this apprentice year because the executive board is looking, *I am looking*, for an apprentice this year.

The practice of apprenticing is also aligned with what Ajahn Viradhammo has taught about in his chapter on *Acceptance and Responsibility* in his first book *The Stillness of Being*. He compared the social commitment of being a Buddhist to that of being a member in a guild. Although he was talking about monastics he said these same ideas applied to any Buddhist community. I think what he was talking about was that as committed Buddhists we come into a community of the heart. We follow the same path and align ourselves with standards like crafts people in a guild. We accept the obligations of membership and encourage each other on the path. As we journey together gradually we gain more ease of being, more confidence. There is joy in the creation of beauty. We learn how things are said and done by others. We grow individually and together. In this way as Ajahn Viradhammo said "To give something of oneself for the benefit of other beings is truly marvelous."

I want to encourage all members and friends of the OBS to see yourself **in** this guild-like Buddhist community of the heart.

Your suggestions, ideas and enthusiasm for the precious teachings of the Buddha are welcome. In particular Jane Brown our membership secretary, Mark Cuddy or Lisa Gorecki the OBS Monastic Coordinator, would love to meet and talk with you after at the social.

And if you felt a little spark inside when I reflected Ajahn V's words about apprenticeship, then I would like to talk to you. It can be that simple. All is available to the mind.

Thank you all again for your ongoing support and I wish you all well in your practice.

Colleen Glass

President, Ottawa Buddhist Society

January 25, 2015

Annex B

Ottawa Buddhist Society
Financial Statements
For the year ended December 31, 2014

Colleen Glass
President

Mark Cuddy
Treasurer

Auditor's report for the members of the Ottawa Buddhist Society:

I have reviewed the attached Balance Sheet and the Statement of Revenues and Expenses, including supporting documents such as ledgers, bank statements, receipts and invoices for the year ended December 31, 2014.

In my opinion these financial statements present fairly the financial position of the Society as at December 31, 2014 and the results of its operations for the year then ended.

Indra Fernando, C.G.A.

Auditor

Date: January 20, 2015

Annex B (cont'd)

BALANCE SHEET AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2014

Assets	2014	2013
TD Canada Trust	\$13,130.97	\$14,433.59
Prepaid Retreat Expenses	\$2,743.20	\$1,494.00
Total Assets	\$15,874.17	\$15,927.59
Liabilities & Retained Earnings		
Prepaid Memberships	\$0.00	\$500.00
Retained Earnings:		
Balance Beginning of Year	\$15,427.59	\$14,558.83
Net Income (Loss)	\$446.58	\$868.76
Balance End of Year	\$15,874.17	\$15,427.59
Total Liability & Retained Earnings	\$15,874.17	\$15,927.59

Annex B (cont'd)

STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENSES FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2014 TO DECEMBER 31, 2014

	2014	2013
Revenues		
Memberships	\$2,890.00	\$3,295.00
OBS Donations	\$7,050.67	\$4,035.68
Donations to Teachers	\$15,256.81	\$13,256.97
Retreat Registration	\$19,060.00	\$9,024.00
Total Revenue	\$44,257.48	\$29,611.65
Expenses		
General Administration	\$4,467.40	\$638.91
Rental (QH & Pagoda & Others)	\$3,380.00	\$4,440.00
Retreat expenses	\$18,970.97	\$9,742.55
Day of Mindfulness expenses	\$791.91	\$795.96
Canadian Charity; note 1	\$15,200.62	\$7,696.02
Other donations; note 2	\$1,000.00	\$1,312.96
Teacher expenses; note 3	-	\$4,116.49
Total Expenses	\$43,810.90	\$28,742.89
Excess of Revenue over Expenses	\$446.58	\$868.76

Notes:

- 1- Includes donations \$10,589.81 to Tisarana (BN.85406 2361 RR0001), \$2,256.73 to Sati Saraniya (BN.84723 7419 RR0001), \$2,000.00 to ARFH (BN.11994 9774) and \$354.08 to Buddhist Congress of Canada (BN. 88517 1546 RR0001)
- 2- For non-monastic meditation leaders: 2014 - Mr. Jim Bedard and Mr. Randy Baker
- 3- For teachers outside Canada (no activity in 2014)

Annex C

OBS – 2014 vs 2013 Variance Analysis

Overall Storyline

⇒ Nature of 2014 activities similar to 2013:

- 2014 had 1 short and 1 long retreat same as 2013; the 2014 October retreat was better attended in 2014 resulting in increased overall revenues (retreat registrations and donations at retreats) and expenses (retreat expenses and transfers to teachers)
- Similar to 2013, a modest year end donation was made to monastic community \$1.25K in 2014 versus \$1.5K in 2013

⇒ Other variances included:

- OBS remunerated Tu-An Pagoda \$2,000 in 2014 versus \$3,000 in 2013
- OBS developed a new website in 2014 at a cost of \$3,300

⇒ Overall 2014 was successful – the OBS met its operating costs, did not draw on accumulated surplus, managed a modest year-end donation to our monastic community, and kept overall surplus to a minimum

Line by Line Comparison of 2014 and 2013 Financial Statements

Revenues

⇒ Memberships: 2014 has 84 paid up members versus 97 in 2013

⇒ OBS donations are up in 2014 primarily because of special donations for new OBS website (\$1,870) and for purchase of winter clothing for monastics (\$343)

⇒ Donations at program events: donations up at June and October retreats (\$3,130 higher in 2014; offset by lower donations to Bedard/Baker (\$700 lower in 2014)

⇒ Retreat registrations: fees collected higher in 2014 because of the larger number of participants; June 2 day retreat (2014 - 22 participants; 2013 - 19 participants); October 7 day retreat (2014 - 28 full time participants / 4 part-time participants; 2013 – 10 full time participants / 16 part time participants)

Annex C (cont'd)

Expenses

- ⇒ General admin expenses include fees for new website and increased costs to support communications (\$3529 new total costs for 2014 for these items)

- ⇒ Rental costs decreased in 2014 because of decreased contribution to the Tu-An Pagoda (2014 - \$2,000 versus \$3,000 in 2013; minor variance in other rental due to one less meeting)

- ⇒ Retreat expenses are for venue, transportation – venue costs for October retreat significantly higher due to number of participants; note retreat expenses almost equal revenues from retreat registration – the idea is that the OBS does not make money from registration fee

- ⇒ Canadian Charities: main difference was for the October retreat; OBS provided teacher with \$6,680 in donations – comparable retreat in 2013 is shown under teacher expenses on financial statement as teacher was from U.S. Also, donations for June retreat were up by \$465 in 2014 over 2013

- ⇒ Other donations – for non-monastic leaders – partially based on donations received -lower in 2014

- ⇒ Teachers outside Canada – in 2013 Bhante Rahula and Ajahn Sudanto – no teachers from outside Canada in 2014

Where the Money Went

Revenues	Expenses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Membership & OBS Donations \$9,941 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administration (\$4,467) Rental (\$3,380) Day of Mindfulness (\$792) Donations to Teachers (\$944) Surplus (\$358)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retreat Registration Fees \$19,060 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retreat Expenses (\$18,971) Surplus (\$89)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Donations at Program Events \$15,257 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Donations to Teachers (\$15,257)

Where the Money Went

Expenses	Expense Details
<p>Administration \$4,467</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Website (OBS community: \$1,879) New Website (Sp Donations: \$1,650) Insurance (\$540) Communications (\$220) Supplies, Bank Fees, Gifts (\$178)
<p>Retreat Expenses \$18,971</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retreat Venue (\$18,201) Transportation (\$377) Supplies & Gift (\$393)
<p>Canadian Charity \$15,201</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tisarana (\$10,590) Sati Saraniya (\$2,257) Arrow River Forest Hermitage (\$2,000) Heron Road (\$354)

Annex E

Membership Report - GM January 25, 2015

Thank you to all of you for coming today and for being members of the OBS.

Thanks to Corinne Baumgarten Dara for her work as Membership secretary from January until August 2014.

Our total memberships for 2014 were 84 paid memberships with a total of 98 members (14 are family memberships). This is less than the paid membership in 2013 (97 memberships).

OBS needs and appreciates these paid memberships to help pay for the cost of venues such as Quaker House and DOMs. Membership is a way of committing to the community and of supporting the mandate of the OBS. As stated the "Participate" page of our website "Becoming a member means you are interested in being a part of our community that actively supports individual and group meditation practice" The OBS is sustained and powered by hard working volunteers; that \$30 membership provides incredible value; it covers a major part of the costs of over 35 events!

Maintaining a significant number of committed members is crucial to sustaining the OBS. As our membership numbers have come down over the last few years, there is a need to make a concerted effort to get old members to renew and to encourage those attending our events to become members. One area that we can make improvements is in communicating the importance of memberships and in perhaps reminding old members to reregister. Because many who attend our events make donations, they may believe that they are members. This year we can assist by giving former members an update through email about their membership status part way through the year.

The work of members is what powers and energizes the OBS. Members are the ones who help in the organizing and running of all of the events. Our membership form has an area where members can specify their interest in volunteering. In the past we have not had a systematic way of using this info. In the next year, the names of members volunteering will be passed on to the persons in charge of the event in the hopes of finding ways to use the services being volunteered. We hope that this will allow more members to get involved and give help and support to organizers.

One of the goals in the last year was to find ways to welcome new members. In the last months of 2014, we have begun sending out a welcome to all new members. We have also tried to have greeters at the Quaker House meetings so that those new will have an opportunity to ask questions etc. Perhaps we can all, as members, continue to make an effort to connect with new people at events. In chatting with new participants, I have become more aware of how nervous and not at ease people are the first times they attend one of our events (am I doing it right; others seem to know what they are doing but I'm not sure etc). As our mandate is to "propagate, promote and advance the teachings of Theravada Buddhism", one of the best ways that we can do this is to help those new to our events feel comfortable and connected. By making the OBS a welcoming place, more people can find the benefits of Dhamma and support each other in the practice of Dhamma.

It will probably come as no surprise that I have brought renewal forms today in the hopes that you will fill yours out today. Even if you do not have a cheque today please fill it out and hand it back (you can put a cheque in the box at the next event or mail the cheque or Mark can take the membership fee from your first donation of the year). As well as helping to sustain the OBS financially, your form will also help us know how you might like to be involved.

Thank you for your support and involvement in 2014. Please know that we value your feedback on ways that we can help participants feel welcome and comfortable and on ways to involve their expertise and energy as valuable assets for the OBS.