



guesthouse

NEWSLETTER

Winter 2015



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Sandra Maitri Webinar: Spring 2016

Riding on the success of our first two webinars in 2015, we are excited to announce that we are finalizing plans for “The Inner Flow of the Enneagram,” a new webinar presented by Diamond Approach® teacher Sandra Maitri for Guest House, which will be held this spring. This will be Maitri’s second Guest House webinar, following her highly attended online teachings about inquiry through the head, heart and belly, which attracted some 300 registrants.



Sandra Maitri

This time she focuses on another of her areas of expertise, the Enneagram: specifically, the concept of flow in the Enneagram of the Personality. Keep up to date on this program as it develops by sending an e-mail to:

webinar@guesthousecenter.org

The Enneagram of Personality describes nine ego types, one of which is most prominent for each of us. Our type is rooted in a characteristic and fundamental view of reality and of ourselves,

and it manifests in specific behavioral and emotional patterns. Understanding what our type is can help us penetrate the repetitive patterns that cause us so much suffering in our lives. Through its “lines of flow,” the Enneagram not only describes these basic personality types, it also explains the dynamic movement of each type toward and away from two other points respectively, and what this movement symbolizes about how our psyche functions. It shows us how moving with the lines of flow we become more guarded and defensive in predictable ways,

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Giving Corner

Guest House cannot effect world peace. It cannot salve the wounds of cultural differences or personal slights. Nor can this place—as beautiful and harmonious and welcoming as it is—pretend to answer all our questions or solve our problems. So what, you may ask, is it exactly that you, our donors, are supporting?

You will formulate your own answers to this question. And you will decide whether those answers merit your continued support. But here is why we believe Guest House is important: Because it is an oasis, a sanctuary to which our guests can escape to ponder what it means to be human. Because it is an invitation for contemplation, for truth to arise, for a greater wisdom to transform us, to open us up to the immensity of love that is possible in the world. Because we know that fostering perpetual inquiry is the only way to transcend our limitations, and to expand our understanding of what is possible when we

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Essential Contemplations

San Bernardino, Paris, Syria, and far too many others to list... The world is crying out for unbounded reservoirs of compassion and healing. We are pained by the suffering that seems to surround us. So it is, perhaps, an appropriate time to acknowledge—no matter our personal travails—our gratitude for the beauty of Being, thanks for our staff’s dedication, and appreciation for the donors who believe in this beloved enterprise we call Guest House.

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One way I see our situation is that creation or the universe is like a tree. Love is the flowers of the tree, and the human being is the final fruit of the tree, the final fruit of creation. The thick nectar of the ripe fruit is gratitude. Gratitude for how things are, gratitude for being vulnerable, gratitude that you can be completely influenceable. Gratitude for being human.
—A. H. Almaas

.....

Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend.
—Melody Beattie

.....

The dominant characteristic of an authentic spiritual life is the gratitude that flows from trust—not only for all the gifts that I receive from God, but gratitude for all the suffering. Because in that purifying experience, suffering has often been the shortest path to intimacy with God.”
—Brennan Manning

Guest House News

CELEBRATE THE SEASON...

LOCALLY This year, Guest House is proud to participate, along with local businesses and townsfolk, in Chester’s annual tree-lighting ceremony on December 4th. Festive spirit and treats abound under the (hopefully) starry winter night at the annual **Holiday Festival in Chester**, when Main Street is lined with luminaries, the music of Sibling Thrivalry wafts through the air and Saint Lucia girls stroll around with treats. The event, where we will serve free hot cocoa and cookies, kicks off the Village’s holiday season. The art and photography galleries of Chester will host new exhibits and the shops will be bedecked and full of gift ideas. If you aren’t in town that night, never fear! Every Sunday through December 20th, the **Chester Holiday Market** will be in full swing, with local farmers and food artisans selling all manner of treats; restaurants and shops tempting shoppers with special offers; and fun holiday happenings popping up around town. For more information: head over to visitchesterct.com



Serving hot cocoa in Chester center

GETTING SOCIAL 2015 saw a big boost to our online presence. We now have 346 likes on our Facebook page, a big increase over the 212 this time last year. We’re posting not just Guest House news, but also local happenings of interest such as clothing and food drives, area job opportunities and town events that are open to the public, along with our own free Wednesday night meditation group reminders.



facebook.com/GuestHouseChester

SHOP GUEST HOUSE

Our eclectic sundries store in the front lobby is a great place to knock some items off your holiday shopping list. The kitchen has prepackaged delights for everyone. Pick up a box of our sinfully good, dairy- and gluten-free, Coconut Haystacks. Who wouldn’t like some of those? Also available is our very own, hugely popular cranberry oatmeal cookie mix...always a hit with any crowd. All the ingredients you need for a batch are packed into a single jar! Our array of colorful journals are bestsellers. And, of course, there’s lots of GH branded merchandise. Bring the beautiful blooming Guest House lotus home on canvas tote bags, T-shirts, travel mugs and other practical necessities.



Now available at the front desk store

Into the GH Wild

By Chris Macek



Painted turtle by the pond

Most of us know Guest House as an incredible place to retreat into ourselves and our spiritual work. But did you know that Guest House is also a retreat for wildlife? In 2010 the National Wildlife Federation (nwf.org) certified Guest House as a Wildlife Habitat. This means the property provides animals with multiple food and water sources, cover and places to raise young. The certification also recognizes sustainable gardening practices used here at Guest

House. As you head into the woods out back, you'll notice the sign that marks that Wildlife Habitat designation.

I first came to Guest House two and a half years ago for my first DANY retreat. I remember looking at Google Maps to situate Guest House geographically and was surprised and thrilled to see the property abuts the Cockaponset State Forest's 25 square miles (16,000 acres) of protected woodland. That first morning on retreat—like a kid with a secret—I rose early and headed out back trying to find my way into the deep woods of the state forest. It was the first week of April and spring was just waking up the forest: skunk cabbage poking green up along the streams, black-capped chickadees with their two-note mating calls, a gelatinous mass of frog eggs floating in the vernal pools. After a morning or two bushwhacking north from Guest House, I finally found the marked trails in the state forest and was able to distinguish the faint track that connects them back to Guest House.



Eastern newt aka red-spotted newt

In those days the trails weren't marked too well. But just this fall, Rich Kerrigan, the new Facilities Director, blazed a clear trail that connects to the state trails, which in turn lead all the way to the Pataconk Reservoir. Rich and his staff have been busy making the wooded areas more accessible and

inviting in other ways too. They have cleaned up and tended the labyrinth area, installed a bench commemorating former executive director Steve Kennedy's work, and planted a river birch in honor of Guest House founder Alia Johnson. This back half of the property has a lovely set of trails perfect for a walking meditation or a brief stroll before breakfast or after lunch.

I still look forward to my morning walks. Since that first retreat, I have encountered a wide variety of wildlife. One rainy morning at last year's retreat, it happened that a fisher cat and I crossed paths. Without thinking, I bolted after it and, following a short race through the woods, it climbed a large beech tree and glared back down chattering excitedly. This year as I was coming back along the trails I heard a strange bark of alarm and then noticed several fox pups scurrying back to their den. They paused a moment, three or four of them jostling each other to get a look at me, and then popped back down into their hole.

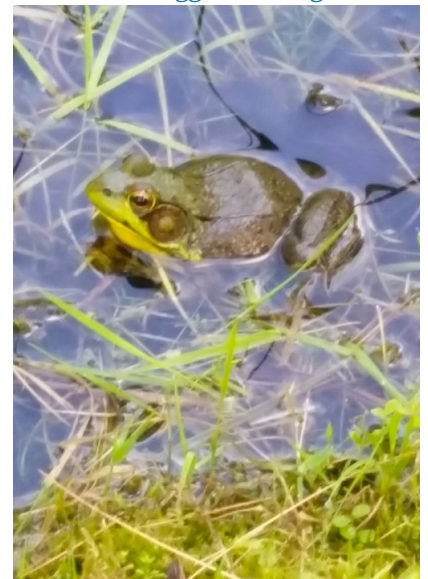
Next time you visit, I invite you to head out back and enjoy the woods.



Entrance to the labyrinth



Robin eggs & bullfrogs



Giving Corner

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embrace our humanity—which is to say, our ability to be affected and changed by each other.

You are the ones who keep this inquiry alive. You are the ones who extend that invitation for truth to manifest, in all its wondrous forms, at Guest House. Your generosity this year toward the Waterworks Fund has helped us upgrade our water systems and lay a new roof over the most problematic and leaky sections of the building. Thank you. We ask you to continue to believe in the impact you are having when you contribute to what we do here. Because of you, we are within reach of our targeted fundraising goal. *We are \$5,000 away from achieving the aims of the Waterworks Fund, and \$25,000 away from our total fundraising target for 2015.*

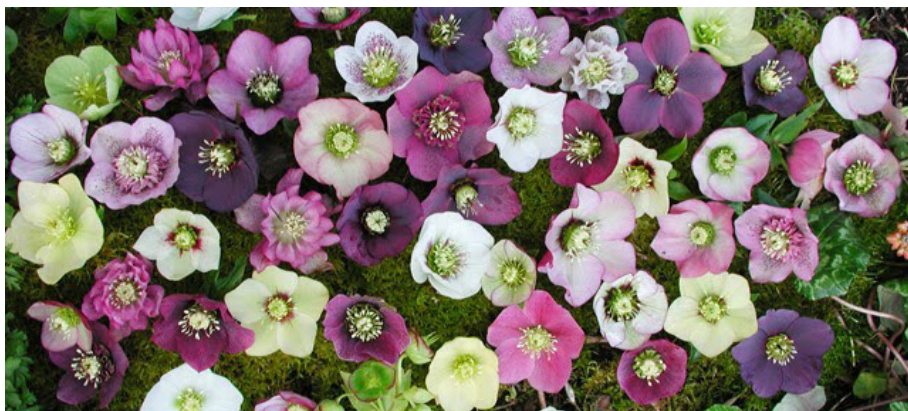


These are not arbitrary figures. They arise from a considered, thoughtful inquiry into what is required to keep our doors open. Please help us keep those doors open.

Meanwhile, our best wishes to you for a bountiful, joyous and fulfilling holiday season.

*With deep gratitude,
The Guest House Board and Team*

Guest House Wish List



We realize not everyone can afford cash gifts to support Guest House. But you can be helpful in other ways. As our facility ages, there's lots that need replacing. And some items—lamps!—are things we just can't get enough of. So here's our wish list for those who might be remodeling, moving into minimalist Zen simplicity at home or plain tiring of certain belongings. Of course, we need these donations to be *in good condition*, and they must harmonize with the comfortable aesthetic of Guest House. So if you have donations, please snap a photo on your smart phone and send it to the Buildings & Grounds Committee chairs, Jorge@jsarango.com (Jorge Arango) and/or shaw_donald@hotmail.com (Don Shaw). If we feel we can find a place for these possessions at Guest House, we will definitely let you know. Many thanks!

Always Needed:

- Table lamps
- Floor lamps
- Area rugs
- Comfortable armchairs
- Wing chairs
- Twin- and queen-size headboards
- Bedside tables
- Mirrors

For Spring Planting:

- 25 flats of myrtle
- Perennial bulbs (daffodils, tulips, fritillaria, crocus)
- Clumping grasses
- Hostas
- Hellebores
- Hucheras

Supplies:

- Spades
- Shovels
- Trowels
- Bulb boosters



Our beautiful hostas



*One of our elephant ears on the deck
Photo Courtesy of Anne Marie Santoro*

From the Kitchen

HOLIDAY FLAVORS

Gingerbread is a classic seasonal delight. But if you've sworn off wheat flour, it's yet another torturous temptation to resist. Enter Chef Tom Oates's gluten-free version, which retains all those great spicy flavors—and, of course, the fat that makes it not totally guiltless—but substitutes brown rice flour for wheat flour. It's so good that even visitors who are not gluten-free gobble it up at Guest House.



GLUTEN-FREE GINGERBREAD

Makes about 20

- 3 cups brown rice flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 2 tsps. dry ginger
- 2 tsps. cinnamon
- 1 tsp. allspice
- 2 tsps. Kosher salt
- 2 tsps. minced fresh ginger
- 2 sticks unsalted butter
- 2 cups (packed) light brown sugar, softened
- 1 cup whole milk
- 4 tsps. vanilla
- 1 cup molasses
- 4 eggs

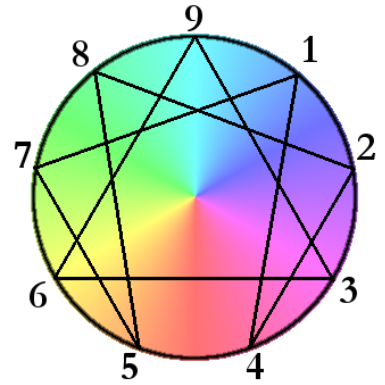
1. Preheat oven to 315 degrees and butter an 8' x 10' baking tray. Set aside.
2. Sift the rice flour, baking soda and dry spices into a bowl. Stir in fresh ginger and set aside.
3. Beat the butter with the brown sugar until light and fluffy.
4. Beat in first the milk, then the vanilla, then the molasses until smooth.
5. Beat in the eggs, one at a time.
6. Pour batter into the greased baking tray and place in preheated oven for about 45 minutes or an hour, until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.
7. Remove from oven, let cool in pan. Cut into squares and stack attractively on a plate.

Sandra Maitri Webinar: Spring 2016

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while moving against the lines of flow leads us into territory closer to our deepest self and, often taboo, the characteristics of our "heart point." As we explore this movement, we will understand the child within ourselves, often very different from how we present in the world. We will also explore how opening to this dimension within ourselves is profoundly transformative, connecting us with qualities of our spiritual nature that have eluded us.

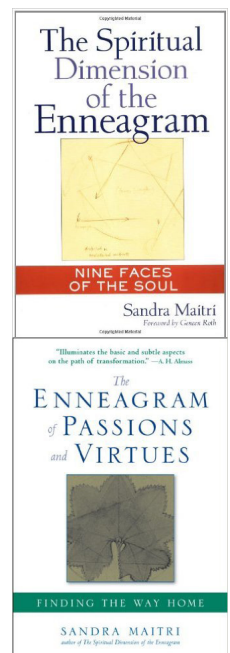
In this three-part webinar, we will explore this inner flow of the Enneagram through lectures, personal exploration of the material presented through exercises done with other participants, and question-and-answer periods. This webinar is appropriate for those with little or no knowledge of the Enneagram, as well as for those whose knowledge is extensive. This material is a unique interpretation of the Enneagram through the lens of the Diamond Approach. Stay tuned for announcements about pricing and other details.



Register Your Interest Here:

webinar@guesthousecenter.org

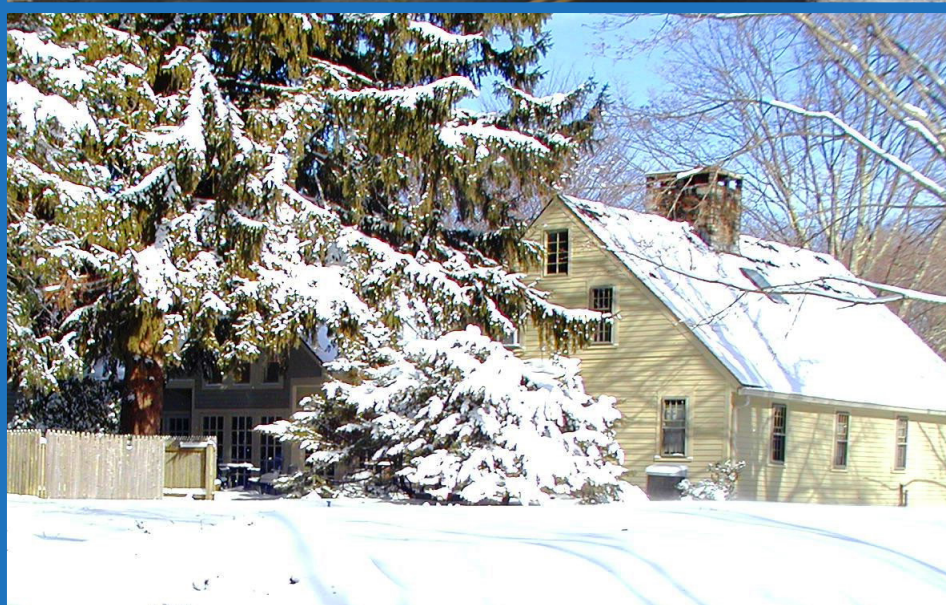
Sandra Maitri is a longtime teacher of the Diamond Approach to Inner Realization, and a member of its leadership council. She leads groups in the San Francisco Bay Area and in the United Kingdom, and has a private practice in Marin County, California. In the early seventies, she became a student of Claudio Naranjo, MD, a pioneer in transpersonal psychology, synthesizing Western psychology and the Eastern and Middle Eastern spiritual traditions. Along with A.H. Almaas, founder of the Diamond Approach, she became a member of Naranjo's original SAT (Seekers After Truth) group where he first presented the Enneagram and its function as a spiritual tool. It is from this original group that most of the well-known teachings about the Enneagram are rooted. Her background also includes studies with various Eastern and Western spiritual and psychological teachers. She has taught the Enneagram for over four decades and is the author of The Spiritual Dimension of the Enneagram: Nine Faces of the Soul, and The Enneagram of Passions and Virtues: Finding the Way Home.



Available at the front desk store

Happy Holidays from Guest House

May we cherish one another, appreciate the individual beauty of each human soul and give thanks for the many gifts we have received.



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