I recently had the opportunity to reunite with the Lotus Band members, Lindsay, Allison, Amy, Kyle, and Kevin (Kevin is my 27 year-old son, so we don’t see him that often). It’s been maybe a year and a half since they played at our 50th anniversary and a lot has changed in their lives. They’re all in various stages of establishing careers and/or career transitions but, despite the challenges they face in today’s gloomy economic climate, it was good to see they are all in good spirits and still able to share lots of laughs together. I think for the most part, they’ve moved on to other things besides being in a temple youth band, but I did mention to them that they all have a perpetual open invitation to play at temple anytime. Actually, Lotus guitarist/vocalist Kevin Hata did in fact sit in with the Bodhi Tree Band at the May 15 service. He had fun and commented on how nice the expanded band sounds with new member Yazmin Whang. In

Please see L.D. NEWS, con’t on page 2

2011 WCBT Golf Tournament
By Dr. Roy Takemura

Our 15th Annual Golf Classic had a new look in 2011. This year’s event was held on the beautiful and challenging Babe Zaharias course at Pacific Palms Resort, the site for the 2011 LPGA KIA Motor Classic. The format of play was a four-man scramble as to an individual medal stroke.

Fifty-nine golfers participated on Friday, May 6, to test their golfing skills. The event included a putting contest, closest to the pin holes and an accuracy drive hole. After the tournament everyone enjoyed a delicious steak and salmon dinner, award presentation and raffle.

Please see GOLF, con’t on page 4

Obon Coming!

Obon 2011 is set for Saturday, June 25, 2:00 PM to 9:00 PM. Plans have been in the making for months but the real work begins on Friday, June 24, with set-up at 1:00 PM. Help will be needed setting up the outdoor booths, yagura (taiko stand), chairs, tables and boards for the gym exhibits, food prep and general hands-on help. We request donations for rice, chili, children’s raffle prizes as well as regular raffle prizes. Age for inari-zushi will be passed out two weeks before Obon for those volunteering to make sushi. Raffle tickets will be sent out to everyone so please sell as many as possible. And don’t forget all those homebaked goodies for the dessert booth. Manto-e lanterns will be available for those wishing to honor the memory of departed relatives and friends. Sign-up sheets will be passed around at Sunday Services for work assignments. See more Obon details in Temple News, page 3.

Massive Destruction in Sendai, Japan
From Higashi Honganji Dobo Newspaper

Due to the earthquake and tsunami that struck the eastern regions of Japan, many of our members have suffered tremendous loss, and temples have been destroyed. Especially in the Sendai district (the prefectures of Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima), 95 temples have been destroyed or severely damaged, and many members have lost their homes and livelihoods. In addition, those temples and members

Please see SENDAI, con’t on page 4

Temple Event Highlights:
• June 4, Oldies Dance
• June 19, Father’s Day/Graduation Service
• June 24, Obon Set-up
• June 25, Obon Festival
• June 26, Obon Clean-up
• Please See Temple News
DHARMA SCHOOL NEWS

Hopefully you have all marked your calendars designating June 25th as the WCBT Obon! Besides dancing, eating delicious foods, and enjoying all kinds of entertainment and cultural exhibits, the children look forward to the game booths. We humbly ask for your donations of new toys or games for the children’s raffle. For $.50 many children will end up going home smiling!

See you at the Obon dance practices!

With Gassho,
Diane Hata

Quote of the Month

I once said, “I could never become a pure priest. I shouldn’t become a minister. Since I am degenerate, I will support and work for Buddhism as a lay person. I will try to actualize the Buddhist ideal as a lay person.” Sensei [Manshi Kiyozawa] then scolded me, saying, “That’s no good. You say you have no virtue, but there is a path in which you can lead others like yourself. You might be able to lead others in a different profession, but the life of a minister is the best for opening up people’s hearts and minds. Just lead those that you can lead.” Sensei often said that to me.

-Rev. Haya Akegarasu

any case, it’s heartwarming to me to see that the youthful friendships established at WCBT can often last, if not deepen, even when life circumstances result in no longer being able to come to temple regularly.

Regarding Bodhi Tree, someday they too will go on with their lives like the members of Lotus (and all our current youthful members), but right now, we can be grateful that the band is still very active at temple. In fact, they just finished playing a well-received set at the “stimulating” Monterey Park Play-Days Festival—the act that preceded them was, shall we say, a “sensual”

Please see L.D. NEWS, con’t on page 4
Oldies Dance XXXIX

“Dancin’ so fine…Look who’s 39!” is set for Saturday, June 4. Steve Kikuchi & High Resolution will provide our favorite hits from the 60’s, 70’s and 80’s. The dance begins at 8:00 PM and will end at 12:00 AM with lots of good fun in between. Presale tickets are $12 or $15 at the door. For info and song requests, call Joanie at (626) 284-8192 or Lillian at (626) 780-9866.

Your Toban chairs will contact you about work shifts and assignments. Plan to come by the center about 6 PM to help with the set-up. Donations are welcome for raffle prizes and drinks. Sign-up sheets for drinks will be at the Sunday service.

A portion of the proceeds from the next two Oldies will be donated to the Japan Relief fund.

Dad’s & Grads Family Service

A Father’s Day & Graduation Family service will be held on June 19, at 10:00 AM. Our speaker Lynette Godoy will give a special tribute for the dads. All graduates will be honored so please contact Diane Hata or Rev. Ken with the names of graduates in your family.

Join us for this special event.

Bon Odori Practice

Bon Odori (dance) practice will be every Tuesday and Friday in June, from 7:00 to 8:30 PM. All you need to bring are your kachi-kachi (castanets) and tenugui (Japanese towel) or fabric of equivalent size. The fans will be provided. The dates again are June 3, 7, 10, 14, 17, and 21. Everyone is invited to join in the fun. See you there!

OBON FESTIVAL!

Obon 2011 on Saturday, June 25 is just weeks away. Supplies are being ordered, lists are being made, friends and family have been contacted and we’re all trying to make this year bigger, better and more exciting than before. The official hours are 2 – 9 PM with the demonstrations beginning at 3:00 and the Obon dancing at 7:30.

Set-up will begin on Friday, June 24. If you are a strong, athletic, vigorous young (or not) adult, Merry will be in the gym at 1:00 waiting for your help to set up the display boards, tables and chairs for the exhibits. We’ll also need help throughout the afternoon and evening with the outdoor booths, yagura (taiko stand), food preparation and general hands-on help.

In the mean time, we are accepting donations for rice, chili, children’s raffle prizes as well as regular raffle prizes. Age for inari-zushi will be passed out before Obon for those making sushi. Raffle tickets have been sent out to everyone so please sell as many as possible. And don’t forget the home-baked goodies for the dessert booth.

Manto-e lanterns will again be available for those wishing to honor the memory of departed relatives and friends. A custom made Japanese lantern will be personalized with the name of your loved one for a $15 donation.

Sign-up sheets will be passed around at Sunday Services for work assignments. If you haven’t signed up yet please contact Lillian at (626) 780-9866 or your Toban Chairs. And if you have temple friends you haven’t seen in awhile, sign them up too. It’s a great opportunity to spend time with them.

Clean up will be Sunday morning, June 26, at 9:00 AM.

Obon & Hatsubon Service

Obon & Hatsubon Service will be held on July 17 at 4:30 PM. Come and join us as we welcome the popular Rev. Masao Kodani and share in the Dharma as he gives his engaging Obon talk.

Please remain for the complimentary otoki dinner that will follow.
GOLE, con’t from page 1

The results of the tournament are as follows:

First team low gross
Lisa Nakasone
Eddie Nakasone
Richard Nakawatase
Aaron Hunsaker
George Sugimoto
Sumio Sato
Dick Goto
Terry Komatsu

Closest to the pin (men)
Hole #14 - Rev. Senyu Matsumoto
Hole $17 - Aaron Hunsaker

Closest to the pin (women)
Hole #14 - Dee Ishida

Accuracy Drive
Terry Komatsu

The event was very successful and raised over $6,000 for the temple. Thank you to the participants, sponsors and members donating raffle prizes.

The committee members were Roy Take murai (Chair), Jack Wear, Julie Griffith, Barbara Shirot a, Richard Kagawa, Lillian Nishihara and Rev. Kawawata. The tournament would not have run so smoothly without the help of our Sangha members. Event volunteers were Richard and Ruby Kagawa, Barbara and Jon Shirot a, Karen Ezaki, Joy, Kimberly and Tami Kitaura, and Nancy Maekawa. The player’s goodie bags were provided by the Jr. YBA with assistance from Denise Underwood, Joy Kitaura, and Rev. Kawawata. Spam musubis were provided by Lillian Nishihara, Hiroko Takemoto, Ruby Kagawa, and Barbara Shirot a.

SENDAI, con’t from page 1

located near the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plants are under evacuation order and living in relief centers. Temples in the area that have been spared major damage are functioning as evacuation centers and temporary morgues for the deceased.

In addition to the Sendai district, combining the totals of other affected areas such as the Ō-u, Yamagata, To kyo, Sanjo, and Takata districts, over 200 temples have suffered damage to their hondos. We continue to receive reports of the damage and destruction incurred by our members from the district headquarters of the above districts as well as the Hokkaido district. As those reports become clearer, we have started to be able to confirm the number of casualties among ministers, their families, and their temple members.

Regarding our response, immediately after the earthquake struck on March 11th, we established the Disaster Relief Department at our headquarters in Kyoto. The next day, staff members were dispatched to the area, and supplies such as towels and tarps gathered at the offices in the Hokuriku area were sent out. From March 13th, on a daily basis, staff members and much needed relief supplies are continuing to be dispatched.

In addition, an onsite Disaster Relief headquarters has been established at the Sendai district office (Miyagino-ku, Sendai City). Bishop Koki Kurokawa is there to head the effort. He visited temples to present funds directly to those affected, and to offer encouragement to the many victims of the disaster. Staff members of the district offices in the Hokkaido, Tohoku, and Kanto regions have also been canvassing the areas to offer encouragement and condolences to those who have suffered and to get more accurate accounts of the damage to property and to the victims.

Thus far, substantial amounts of relief funds have been accumulated at our Honzan from every district in Japan. Over $1.5 million in emergency relief subsidies have already been distributed to victims in the hardest hit districts. Moreover, relief fund donation boxes have been placed at many locations.

L.D. NEWS, con’t from page 2

bode well for them in the future!
Gassho,
Peter Hata

Selected E-mail
Dear Peter,
Thanks very much for your valuable comments [Ed. note: see last month’s issue] regarding my queries about vipassana. They were very informative, and I will definitely look into the history of vipassana.

With Regards
Sandip Patil

From = Isaura
Subject = Becoming a Buddhist
Message = I am a Hispanic-American female, who has been looking for a religion that fits the way I think and see life. I studied a minimal portion of Buddhism in school and after reading and being inspired and after doing a project on the Dalai Lama I decided that I really want to look more into Buddhism. What resources do you recommend I read or courses should I take? If I decide to be Buddhist, how do I become a Buddhist?

Dear Isaura,
Thank you for writing to us. Like you, I studied a bit of Buddhism. The more I studied the more I realized how well it fitted how I actually looked at things. It still amazes me! There are so many resources that it simply is overwhelming to pick just a few, but I’ll recommend a few books and authors, some of them you may be able to get on inter-library loan:

1. “The Buddha Way” by William Corlett and John Moore is an easy going, almost conversational approach that I found helpful and comforting.
2. “Buddhism: A Concise Introduction” by Houston Smith and Philip Novak is very good. Houston Smith is a major authority on world religions and his books are often used as textbooks. As an aside, in his ‘Afterward’ he talks about my own school of Buddhism, Jodo Shinshu. We’ve been here longer than any other Buddhist group in the U.S. but we’re the least known!
3. “Buddhism Plain and Simple” by Steve

Please see L.D. NEWS, con’t on page 5
Hagen is a straight-forward approach to important Buddhist ideas. I think this is a good starter book to getting deeper in!

4. Anything by the author Thich Nhat Hanh. I personally like “The Sun My Heart”. His “The Heart of the Buddha’s Teaching” is a superb presentation of the nuts and bolts of Buddhist concepts and ideas. I refer to this often, though it is dry compared to his other works.

5. “Vision of Buddhism” by Roger Corless is one of my personal favorites. It’s bit more heavier, but worth the effort. I really like his “vision” of it all.

6. “Zen Flesh, Zen Bones” by Paul Reps - Best first book into Zen. While I’m not a Zen practitioner, I think the stories here are simply great!

7. Simply because it’s the school of Buddhism that fits me best, “River of Fire, River of Water” by Taizetsu Umino. I hope you’ll like it!

Now as for courses, you can check your nearby colleges and universities. Remember that some are “religious” and so you may get a filtered view of Buddhism. What I really recommend is you find Buddhist temples and groups near you that you can visit. Many will offer classes or lectures. But more importantly I think it is best to see the Sangha at work and play. You’re not just embracing a teaching, you are embracing life. That’s what it’s all about! Do remember that there are different schools of Buddhism, so sample about till you find a place where you can be challenged and where you can grow. “www.dharmanet.net” and “www.buddhanet.info” have excellent directories to the different Buddhist groups that you might discover in your area.

How to become a Buddhist? It is not necessary to go through a ritual, though I did, and I found it most meaningful to do so. It is not about accepting certain teachings, though one finds oneself drawn irresistibly to those conclusions. It is about taking refuge. Realizing that you are a spiritual refugee. You can’t go back to where you came from, and you don’t know where you’re going. But you come across a fellow named Buddha and he is ever ready to offer you shelter. And you find there is safety in that shelter called the Dharma and the Sangha. And for now there is peace. When you realize that you are on the run and you find that you are running to Buddha, and you need to stay with him, that’s what makes you a Buddhist. The teachings and life all follow from this. I hope you will keep running to Buddha!

Sincerely,
Frederick Brenion

To: dharma@livingdharma.org
From = Hariprasad
Subject = Join Buddhism
Message = Namasthe, I am from India and I am a 12th standard student. How can I join Buddhism. Here in my area there is no Buddhist prayer centre. Please help me.

Dear Hariprasad,
Thank you so much for writing. I am honored to be answering an email from Buddha’s own homeland! I know that India is a very large country and that Buddhist are very much of a minority, but Buddhism is growing again in its native land. Here is a link to a directory of Buddhist groups in India: “http://www.buddhanet.info/wbd/country.php?country_id=42” - just click on the area nearest to you to find groups that you might be able to reach. Certainly you can correspond with other groups beyond your area. Do remember that there are many different schools of Buddhism, each with rich and wonderful teachings. Take your time examining and reflecting. Get a broad perspective and then find a school that would be best suited for your personal growth. Let me wish you well in your explorations. I hope that soon you will find a spiritual home. Let us know how you do!

Namaste,
Frederick Brenion

From = Nanette
Subject = questions
Message = I am conducting an interview for a religions course. I am very interested in Buddhism and have some questions that I am hoping can be answered. I thank you for any information you can give me.

Sincerely,
Nanette

Dear Nanette,

Thanks for visiting our Living Dharma Website. As to your questions:

What are the important holidays and traditions?

Regardless of particular Buddhist school, most Buddhists observe (with a wide variety of traditional ceremonial rituals) the key events of the Buddha’s life: Hanamatsuri, Buddha’s birthday, April 8; Bodhi Day, his attainment of awakening, Dec. 8; Nirvana Day, his passing away, Feb. 15.

How has the religion shaped your life?
The teachings of the Buddha are followed by many people, including myself, because when sincerely taken to heart, they can positively transform one’s entire way of looking at life. And actually, the teachings are continuing to shape my life even now. The more I personally take the teachings to heart, the more the teachings benefit me.

What symbols, icons and deities are used in the worship if any?
The most important symbol in all Buddhist traditions (and probably all religions worldwide) is the object in the center of the altar. Depending on specific Buddhist tradition, this might be a statue of the historical Shakyamuni Buddha (the founder of Buddhism), or as in our Shin Buddhist tradition, the figure of Amida Buddha, the “cosmic Buddha” of infinite wisdom and compassion. But neither this Buddha or the historical Buddha is a deity. Shakyamuni was a human being awakened to the truth. Amida Buddha serves as a symbol of the ultimate truth, or Dharma, that all Buddhas, including Shakyamuni awaken to. Awakening to this truth is becoming a Buddha, an awakened being.

Do you face any challenges in practicing your beliefs?
Yes, in our lives, things do not always go our way. And ultimately, we all face the same realities of life: aging, illness, and eventually death. However, the Sangha or community of fellow seekers of the Dharma, provides compassionate support and the collective encouragement to appreciate life and live it fully.

What are the common practices (meditation, praying or observances)?
There are an incredible variety of practices throughout Buddhism, but one common
Buddhist practice might be said to involve, in one way or another, not praying to an external being, but looking inward and examining the nature of one’s own self. The object is to see that it is our ego-self or self-attachment that leads to increased suffering in our lives and stands in the way of our own Buddhahood.

Are their different practices within Buddhism and are they specific to a region? Yes, of course. Buddhism began in India 2,500 years ago but today is virtually a worldwide phenomenon, with its associated diversity. Today, many American Buddhists seek to adapt Buddhist practices—but not of course its essential teachings. Buddhist practices originated within the cultures of India, Southeast Asia, and the Far East but often need to be adapted in order to communicate their deeper meaning in America. One obvious “regional” change involves language. For example, even though my own Shin Buddhist tradition has been in America well over 100 years, communicating its essence in English without using often-confusing Japanese terms is still difficult. But it is progressing, especially because in the last decade or so, there has been an opening up, on the part of the Japanese headquarters, of the clerical path to American-born, and their numbers are currently on the rise.

Have changes in the world affected the religion in anyway? Yes and no. “Yes,” because for example, when Commodore Perry opened Japan to trade in 1853, Buddhism in Japan was affected in various ways from the resulting influx of Western ideas and culture. “No,” because even though practices in a modern American Buddhist temple might bear little resemblance to those in a Buddhist Sangha in the time of the Buddha, the teachings of the Buddha have been faithfully passed down through the ages to us today. The expression and practice of the teachings has changed, but the truth contained within—that all life is interdependent and ultimately, one—is timeless and universal.

Best Wishes,
Peter Hata

From = Shari Ramos
Subject = Jr. YBA
Message = How can my 15 yr old son join Jr. YBA? Is there someone I can contact regarding this? Thank you!

Hi Shari,

Thank you for writing about your son joining Jr. YBA. All you need to do is bring him to one of our Sunday services, and we can get him signed up.

Mrs. Denise Underwood and I are the advisers. The Juniors meet after service on Sundays, and they participate in various events like seminars with other temple’s Jr. YBA groups.

There is a yearly registration fee and some forms to fill out, but the most important thing is to come in and start getting to know the other kids in the group!

Looking forward to meeting you and your son.

Gassho,
Tor Ormseth
West Covina Buddhist Temple

**OBON FESTIVAL**

Saturday, June 25, 2011
from 2:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

DEMONSTRATIONS & EXHIBITIONS of JAPANESE CULTURE

MARTIAL ARTS including KENDO, KARATE, and JUDO, CLASSICAL JAPANESE DANCE, Bugaku Dance and exciting TAIKO DRUMMING.

The colorful OBON FOLK DANCING in which everyone is invited to participate, will take place in the evening.

EXHIBITIONS will include flower arranging, bonsai, Japanese garden, KiMEKOMI DOLLs and arts and crafts from the Buddhist religion.

at the East San Gabriel Valley Japanese Community Center parking lot
1203 West Puente Avenue, West Covina

For more information on the festival, please call:

THE WEST COVINA BUDDHIST TEMPLE
www.livingdharma.org
(626)913-0622 or (626)960-2566
BON ODORI PRACTICE

Tuesday and Friday, 7:00 p.m.
June 3, 7, 10, 14, 17 and 21

at the East San Gabriel Valley Japanese
Community Center parking lot
1203 West Puente Avenue, West Covina

Bring your family, your friends, your neighbors…
the Obon dance is for boys and girls,
men and women, of all ages.

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!!

This year's OBON FESTIVAL will be held on
Saturday, June 25th
from 2:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

For more information on the practices or the festival, please call:
THE WEST COVINA BUDDHIST TEMPLE
(626) 913-0622
www.livingdharma.org
お寺ニュース

盆踊り練習

前号でお知らせしましたが、今年の盆踊り練習は6月3日（火）午後7時よりおこなわれます。今年は畠山メリー、比嘉ジェニファー両夫人新たに頭地所ステファニーさんが加わり練習が行われます。6月中の毎火曜日並び金曜日6月21日まで午後7時よりセンター駐車場にて行われます。盆踊りの不得意な河和田開教使も練習に参加します。恥ずかしがらず一緒に練習いたしましょう。

父の日・卒業家族礼拝

6月19日(日)は父の日です。お寺では午前10時より父の日・卒業家族礼拝をお参りいたします。今年卒業式を迎えられる子ども達にはお寺より記念品が贈呈されます。ご家族に卒業されるお子さんがおられましたらお寺までお知らせください。ご家族お揃いでどうぞ父の日・卒業家族礼拝へお参りください。お父さん方にも素敵なプレゼントがございます。

お盆フェスティバル

今年もいよいよお盆フェスティバルの月となりました。今年のお盆フェスティバルは6月25日（土）に開催されます。毎年ながら法話会の方々にはソーメン、お寿司のご協力をお願い申し上げます。ソーメン準備は6月24日（金）夜に予定しております。また巻き寿司もフェスティバル当日朝に食べさせていただきます。お願い申し上げます。なお6月26日（日）午前9時より後かたづけを致しますのでそちらの方のご協力もお願い申し上げます。お寺にとどまってお盆フェスティバルは大事な基盤を集めございますのでよろしくお願い申し上げます。
パワードフィールドです。