

Local

Baker City gets a sample of Tibetan Buddhist traditions

• SAND MANDALA CREATION PROVES FOCUS OF WEEK-LONG EVENT

BY SUNNY WERNER
Sunny@TheBakerCountyPress.com

Baker residents were treated to a rare experience this month. Collaboration between Crossroads Carnegie Art Centre's Executive Director, Ginger Savage, a Baker City family and the Drukpa Mila Centre of Salem resulted in the arrival of Venerable Karma Namgyel Rinpoche of Bhutan and the monk and followers of Drukpa Mila Center.

The visitors offered rituals and ceremonies from the traditions of the Tibetan Buddhists.

Their visit lasted from Friday, July 17 until Sunday, July 26.

The focus of their visit was the creation of a sand mandala.

The sand mandala is one of the oldest of the sacred art traditions of Tibetan Buddhism.

In Sanskrit, "mandala" means "world in harmony."

The mandala was created entirely by hand, using sand that was made and colored by Rinpoche; he had taken chunks of granite in Bhutan and crushed them into sand using only hand tools.

Using only natural local ingredients, he then coloured the sand in the traditional way.

The results were then used in the creation of the sand mandala.

During the course of creating the mandala, there were many events open to the public, giving local residents the opportunity to view the mandala as it was taking shape as well as observe the beauty and peace of the room in which it was taking place.

From entering the grounds of the Crossroads Carnegie Centre, where prayer flags flew along the wrought iron fences, to the main downstairs hall, which had been transformed into a place of beauty and peaceful worship, the cultural traditions of Bhutan were displayed.

In the center of the room, the Sutras were displayed, with flowers and fruit offerings surrounding. This particular set of Sutras belongs personally to Ven. Karma Rangyel Rinpoche; it was printed off the original wooden forms used for the first Sutras.

There are 333 books of the Sutra, and every book was wrapped in a special, specific manner by Rinpoche.

Bhutan is a fascinating and beautiful country, ruled by a young king and queen. The traditions are those of Nepal, its neighbour.

One of the most remarkable points that separates Bhutan from other nations is that, instead of focusing on Gross National Product, as other countries do, Bhutan focuses on Gross National Happiness.

Having seen, from first world nations, that the hap-



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Guests were invited to join in a few traditional Tibetan Buddhist dance moves.



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The sand mandala was painstakingly created, giving visitors a chance to view its progress.

piness of citizens had no relationship to their country's GNP, the Bhutanese determined that individuals had the right to pursue happiness. Thus they measure their success by how happy their citizens are.

The events at Crossroads during the building of the mandala included the opening tea ceremony to welcome Karma Rinpoche who has recently returned from Bhutan.

On Saturday there was children's story time, and mandala art for all ages.

Following, Karma Rinpoche talked about the sacred art tradition of the sand mandala.

The entire week was filled with opportunities to learn and participate in various activities centered around the mandala and the Bhutanese traditions.

On Saturday was the Chenrezig fire ceremony. The inspiration of this fire ceremony is world peace and the spiritual benefit of all beings. The four-hour ceremony was held in the side courtyard of Crossroads.

Those who had lost family members were welcomed to write their names on a slip of paper and give that to the fire.

In the same way, people were encouraged to write

down any difficulties they were experiencing, and offer those to the fire as well.

On Sunday were the guru's dance, performed by Rinpoche, and then the dismantling and dispersing ceremonies.

The guru's dance is an ancient tradition, and only performed by masters who have reached certain levels of holiness. Participants were fortunate in that Guru Rinpoche has been a teacher of the various dances since he was 16.

The dance is offered to help heal the world as well as any who view it. The dancer is following a tightly choreographed set of movements, each of which has a certain meaning and purpose.

The dancer draws with his body, a three dimensional mandala. The company present was able to share in the experience of Bhutan's rich cultural dance and musical traditions.

The company then progressed to the dismantling ceremony. The completed mandala measured 4'x4'. The intricate designs and brilliant colors provided rich interest to the eye, and gave inspiration to meditation.

Prayers were offered and there was a time of chant-

ing and meditation before the dismantling began.

In Western eyes, it seemed a waste to demolish this beautiful and richly detailed creation, but the reason for doing so is to show the impermanence of "things," a concept basic to Buddhist teachings.

The dismantling began, with half the sand being given to those who were in attendance as a blessing for their personal health and healing.

The other half of the sand was placed in a specially prepared vessel. Once the sand was given, it was time for the peace walk.

The Rinpoche, the monks of Drukpa Mila Center in Salem and their followers, along with the company of attendees from Baker, walked from Crossroads Carnegie Centre to the Powder River, where the sand was dispersed with offerings to the river.

The Buddhist way teaches that the sand has become imbued with the prayers, ceremonies and meditations, so as it flows into the river the blessings also flow, to reach all species in the waters and wherever the waters flow, all the way to the oceans of the world.

ODFW adopts amended Sage-Grouse rules

SALEM, ORE – The Fish and Wildlife Commission adopted amended administrative rules for sage-grouse management in Oregon at its meeting in Salem today.

The new rules require mitigation actions to offset impacts of large-scale and other developments such as aggregate mining, wind, solar, and geothermal energy plants.

Before, ODFW mitigation rules were effectively only recommendations to permitting entities and not requirements for mitigating development impacts in designated core habitat for sage-grouse. Core habitats are areas which encompass about one-third of Oregon's sage-grouse habitat but support more than 90 percent of the bird's populations.

On July 24th, the Oregon Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) adopted new rules that would allow limited development in core habitat after going through an avoidance test (meaning the project proposal shows other areas were considered but development is dependent on unique geographic features of the site, not feasible elsewhere, and necessary for infrastructure, economic opportunity or public health safety). The new LCDC rules also require developments to follow ODFW's mitigation rules.

The administrative rules of ODFW and LCDC will work together to address one of the threats to sage-grouse identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS): the lack of regulatory certainty in protecting sage-grouse habitat. That protection is key in the upcoming USFWS decision whether or not to list sage-grouse as a threatened or endangered species. The USFWS is expected to make this decision by Sept. 30, 2015.

Both commissions also heard public input from several public meetings in southeast Oregon earlier in the summer.

The Commission is the policy-making body for fish and wildlife issues in the state. Its next meeting is Aug. 7 in Salem.

Eldercare conversation ahead

Joe Mitchell, a nationally recognized long-term care Medicaid expert and Accredited VA Claims Agent, will in Baker City, Thursday, August 13th. He will be offering a free class designed to provide information to individuals and families needing long-term care or assistance.

The Medicaid Asset Protection and Veteran's Aid class will be Thursday, August 13, 2014 from 1-3 p.m. at Baker County Community Connection, 2810 Cedar St..

Topics he will be covering:

- How to qualify for Medicaid, protect assets and avoid the pitfalls.
- How most of what you have heard about Medicaid is wrong.
- Why you need a Medicaid expert on your side.
- "Aid and Attendance" pensions (up to \$2,085 per month) available for wartime veterans or their widows.

This event is hosted by the Baker County Long Term Care Coordination Team. Registration is not required. Come and learn so you can make better decisions for you and your loved ones.

Moose on the loose



Photo Courtesy of the Huntington Chamber of Commerce

This moose was swimming the Snake River from Oregon to the Idaho side. A boater went along side the moose to make sure the young fellow made it. They said the moose laid there for several hours before moving on.

