

# *Welcome to Liberation Park*

*Orientation Manual - Please Take a Moment  
to Familiarize Yourself*

*Have a Pleasant Stay....*

**We're Glad You're Here!** We are working to create a peaceful, natural, somewhat rustic retreat environment for solo retreatants and occasional small groups who wish to join us in a Dhamma centered life. The 'wheres' and 'hows' are not always obvious so we hope this document helps. Thank you for joining us in the journey for however long you are able. We wish you a peaceful sojourn!

### **Cost**

We operate on a donation basis. There is no set fee for hospitality, accommodations or guidance but your donation allows us to pay for the building and maintenance of the valley and facilities. There is a donation box in the Guest House. We very much appreciate your support.

### **Guidance**

Liberation Park provides hospitality for mature practitioners to practice silent personal retreat. For the most part you will be expected to self direct your retreat. If Santikaro is on site you may make arrangements to meet with him to talk about your practice. You are welcome to participate in any group meditations or study sessions taking place during your stay. Jo Marie is available for spiritual direction or to facilitate some time with the horses if you so desire.

### **What to Bring**

- Your own food (fridge and dry storage are available)
- Sleeping bag or bedding and pillow if you will be in the hermitage or the tents (we have sleeping bags to loan if you do not have one)
- Towel and personal toiletries including nontoxic insect repellent and biodegradable soap and shampoo (we have towels to loan if you forget)
- Outdoor clothing appropriate to the season including rain gear and rugged shoes
- Flashlight, batteries and alarm clock if needed
- Water bottle

### **Please DO NOT bring:**

- Drugs, alcohol or tobacco products (except prescription drugs and caffeine)
- Computers or I-Pads
- Companion animals (except by special arrangement)
- Radios (musical instruments can be played if they are not disturbing others)

### **Bedbug Precautions**

With the recent global upsurge of bedbug infestations, we ask that you postpone your visit if you have had a known exposure, or a known treatment of your household in the last 90 days.

### **Parking**

Our parking area is small at the moment. Do what you can to park inside the fenced off area by the road, in a spot that does not block the horse trailer. If all spots are taken, park along the road. Please do not park inside the main boundary fence or anywhere on the farm road, including up by the shed and picnic area. You may drive up to the shed area to unload your belongings and then return it to the parking area.

## **Property Boundaries & Roads**

On the final page is a map of LP boundaries. Please don't stray onto neighboring property. The boundary fences are marked in blue. ***All the horse pasture fences have electric wire and the jolt can be quite painful - careful not to touch! The fence around the septic mound is also electrified.***

Sometimes there is no other option, but **whenever possible, go through gates, and not over fences.**

You are welcome to take walks or bike rides on area roads. There is one road we ask guests to avoid, and it is the triangle shaped road that goes around our north neighbor's property (Kimono). In order to respect their privacy we ask that you stay on the main road (Kendall), and not take the scenic tour around their house.

## **Intoxicants**

We ask that no intoxicants (aside from caffeine and necessary medications) be used while staying at LP. Smoking is not allowed on the property. Thank you for your understanding.

## **Quiet**

The front community areas near the shed, garden, caretaker's cottage and barn are considered the more social areas of Liberation Park. Once you near the first tent heading towards the back of the property, we ask that you observe a respectful quiet for the sake of the valley and for the sake of those who have come for the meditative quiet. Be aware that there may be retreatants in the cottage behind the guesthouse, and in the guesthouse bedroom. So voices should be kept relatively quiet even in these areas, though quiet conversation is fine.

## **Close all Gates and Doors.**

If you find a fence gate deliberately secured in the open position, leave it open. Otherwise please close all gates and doors behind you *even if you think you are coming right back*. Because of the many domestic and wild critters we live with, it is important to keep everyone in their proper homes: horses in the pasture, raccoon, skunks, squirrels & woodchucks out of the shed, etc. ***The most important doors to close are inside and around the barn:*** horses will overeat on certain things such as grain in the tack room or duck house, or apples in the orchard, resulting in crippling illness or death. A barn door or gate left open can quickly have tragic results.

## **Caretaker's Cabin**

The rustic, wood sided cabin west of the guest house is where the caretaker's (Santi & Jo) live. Please respect their privacy, but in case of an urgent need you are welcome to knock on the door.

## **Kitchen**

The shared kitchen in the Guest House is available for food storage and cooking. You will be directed where to put food when you arrive. You may be navigating one or more other retreatants during your retreat. If you can bring some pre-prepared foods that just need to be heated up it makes the shared kitchen experience easier.

## **Laundry & Bathrooms**

You will find two full bathrooms with showers and a laundry room on the first floor of the Guest House. When using the laundry, use biodegradable soaps and try to be timely with removing your laundry and allowing others to use the facilities.

### **Food Storage & Composting**

Store all food in the Guest House kitchen and pantry. No food items are allowed in the tents, and only tightly contained snack items in the Forest Hermitage and the Garden Hermitage – the mice, raccoons and skunks quickly identify sources of food and become rather pesky neighbors. Please use the composting pile in the fenced garden for food scraps. Help yourself to anything growing in the garden. We ask that a vegetarian diet be observed while visiting Liberation Park.

### **Biodegradable Soaps**

Please use only non-toxic and biodegradable soaps for bathing, laundry and dishes. All of your waste water goes directly into the environment and quickly finds its way to the stream and the groundwater. If you are unsure whether your soap is biodegradable ask us for a container of castile soap.

### **Tent Care**

The tents each have instruction sheets in them - please help us keep them in good shape for a long time to come. Please use your own bedding, or the sleeping bag liners and sleeping bags provided. Using the liner is important so the bag is in good, clean shape for the next camper.

### **Propane Lamps**

If you are at all uncertain in using the propane lamps, be sure to ask for a demonstration. They are safe and very useful. *It is very important not to touch the mantle when lighting!* They are fragile and will disintegrate with contact. ***Keep away from tent canvas and fabrics. Put out before falling asleep.***

### **Cell Phones and Computers**

You may carry a cell phone if you feel you need it for safety or necessary communication with family, but please refrain from using it for discretionary conversation. Please leave your computer at home or in your car.

### **Barn and Animals**

Animals are a vital part of our life here. We have a thriving community of cats and horses. Many of the cats are or have been feral and may be shy. Some are more eager to interact with people. Feel free to make friends! Ask for help before approaching the horses if you are not familiar with them. They are always happy to greet and visit with guests, but they are big and there are some safety precautions to be observed. Please do not let cats into any buildings – the indoor cats have a home at the caretaker's cottage 😊

### **Bike trail, Kickapoo Valley Reserve, Wildcat, Necedah**

If you brought a bike, or if you want to take a break from meditating and go for a hike or canoe, please ask us for more information about how to find the bike trail, the Kickapoo River, or the one of several parks and reserves.

### **Local Clinic/medical care: Scenic Bluffs, Hospitals, Warrens Walk in clinic**

If you need medical care, please first let us know (unless it is an emergency). We can direct you to the most appropriate facility. There is a very good community clinic in Norwalk (Scenic Bluffs), two hospitals in the near vicinity (Sparta & Tomah), and a walk in clinic in Warrens, about 25 miles away, with more liberal hours than the one in Norwalk.

### **Wild Cats & Other Animals**

Bobcats are shy but if you are lucky you may see one. We believe there is at least one living in the valley and she has been spotted in the back meadow.

Cougars have occasionally been seen in the region, but generally try very hard to avoid people. The DNR reports that breeding adults and kittens have not been reported this far south. The solitary adults that have been encountered are thought to be only passing through. If you should encounter a large cat it is important not to run as that can make one look a little like a cat toy. You may walk away quietly, or if the cat shows an interest in you, make yourself as large and noisy as possible. Please tell us if you encounter a cat at LP.

Black bears and wolves have been spotted South of I-90 very rarely. Neither should bother humans, but please report any sightings. Coyotes are common and are more often heard than seen.

### **Ticks & Lyme disease**

Deer ticks live in our area. If you visit LP, please be aware of the possibility of contracting lyme disease, which is a tick born illness. Like most of the midwest, the northeast, and increasingly the northwest United States, Lyme disease and other tick born illnesses are endemic here. Encountering ticks is one of our facts of life at LP and we are learning to live with nature's creatures and rules.

Fortunately Lyme disease is both preventable & treatable. By following these precautions you can be reasonably certain that you will not contract the disease.

#### ***Precautions & prevention***

- Wear light colored clothing & use insect repellent (we can recommend some good, non-toxic brands, samples of which can be found in the shed).
- Familiarize yourself with what a deer tick looks like. There is an identification card in the shed.
- Check yourself thoroughly -- full body inspection -- once a day. Have someone check your back, or use the mirrors provided in the shed. It is thought that ticks must be attached for longer than 24 hours to transmit the spirochete responsible for Lyme disease.
- Remove imbedded ticks with pointy tweezers. Get the head not the body! Tweezers are in the shed by the mirrors.
- A single dose of doxycycline is effective in preventing Lyme disease if taken at the time an embedded tick is removed (available locally for those who are certain they do not have allergies to any antibiotics).
- If bitten, be mindful of any rash or flu-like symptoms over the next several weeks. Prompt treatment (usually 2- 4 weeks of twice daily antibiotic depending on length of time symptoms have been present) will eradicate the disease and prevent long term sequelae.

## Local Farmer's Markets, Stores & Restaurants

**Northwood Country Market** - Hiway 16, just west of the intersection with Hiwy 27 in Sparta, South side of the street. Local veggies, some organics, juice, cereals, almond milk, cheese, tea. Closed on Sundays

**Troyer Family** - 23993 Cty Hwy XU. Take 71 towards Sparta. Take first left on Landmark Ave. Go up the steep hill to the end of Landmark at XU. The Troyer farm will be directly in front of you. They have organic veggies, eggs, jellies and baked goods. Closed on Sundays.

**La Tienda** – basic Mexican staples

**Wilton General Store** - on Wilton Main St across from Country Thyme restaurant. Funky little old fashioned general store. Some bulk items. Hit or miss.

**Gordy's in Tomah** – small organic and bulk section

**Sparta Farmer's Market** - Wed 2-5pm, Sat 8-12am; State Bank parking lot on Water Street. Sometimes not well attended. 5/28 - 10/27.

**Tomah Farmer's Market** - Wed 4-6pm, Sat 7-1am; Gillett Park on E. Holton; June-Oct.

**Onalaska Farmer's Market** - Sun 7-1pm; 1260 Crossing Meadows; June - Oct.

**LaCrosse Farmer's Market** - Wed 8 - sellout; Bridgeview Plaza; June - Oct

Fri 4-8 pm; King St between 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>; May - Oct

Sat 6-1 pm; between 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> & Vine & State; June - Oct

**Viroqua and La Crosse** both have Co-Ops with a large selection. We are happy to shop for people when we go in to town.

**The Place** - good greasy spoon breakfasts at a low cost. Don't take the big table in the center in the morning - it's the local retired guys coffee klatch table and you'll get the evil eye if you get to it first..

**Ginny's** on Water Street in Sparta - best coffee to be found in the area. Soup/sandwich/salads.

Please don't hesitate to ask us for information or help.  
Thank you for visiting and please enjoy your stay!

Jo Marie Cell Phone: 608-377-2784  
Santikaro Cell Phone: 608-780-0481

