

Deep Spring Center for Meditation and Spiritual Inquiry

Fall Vipassana Basics Retreat Howell Conference and Nature Center Howell, MI October 21-23, 2011

Thank you for your registration for the upcoming meditation retreat with Barbara Brodsky, and John Orr. A place has been reserved for you.

The retreat will be held in Howell Nature Center in Howell, which is located a short distance southwest of Brighton. Driving instructions to the center and some basic information is attached.. We encourage car pooling due to limited parking. The emergency contact number during the retreat is Diana Cramer (cell number 734-904-3782) where you can leave a message. The number will be checked regularly.

Check in at the retreat will begin at 4:30 pm on Friday, October 21.

Retreat guidelines will be presented and dinner will be served at 6:00 pm. This will be the only opportunity for social interaction until breaking of the Noble Silence on Sunday. The retreat program and Noble Silence are scheduled to begin at 7:00 pm on Friday. The evening program ends Friday and Saturday nights at about 9:30 pm. The retreat will end at about 1:45 pm on Sunday, October 23. Everyone will be asked to help clean up, restore furniture to its original position, and carry retreat items out to cars. Everything must be clean and the building vacated by 3:00 pm. Please plan to stay to help with this task.

If you cannot arrive before the program begins at 7:00 pm on Friday, please keep in mind that the Noble Silence will have begun before you arrive. Please take care to enter the center quietly. Your room assignment will be posted. Your retreat registration should all be paid prior to the retreat, so there is no reason to "formally" check in. Diana and Neil Cramer will be the Retreat Managers. Leave a note in Diana's basket if you have questions or problems. Contact the managers verbally only if there is an urgent situation.

Noble Silence

What is Noble Silence? When you arrive there will be time set aside for registration, unpacking, supper, and conversation. With the beginning of the opening talk, the retreat becomes a place of silence. Meditation students are asked not to talk, except with the teachers or with one another in appropriate ways in small group meetings. If there are cases of emergency or questions concerning the retreat schedule or process, you may talk with the retreat manager. In order to keep your concentration on the practice, it is requested that you do not read, write, or find other activities that would keep your mind busy. An exception is limited journal writing. Quieting the body and the voice also helps to quiet the mind and create a space in which you can observe the mind.

Another aspect of silence is watching our movements, endeavoring to use mindfulness as we walk, shower, open and close doors, do our work assignments, so as to have minimal impact on others and the environment.

Noble Silence also fosters a sense of aloneness, even in a retreat full of people. It is important for you to resist urges to social contact by note, glance, or whisper in order to benefit most fully from this opportunity, as well as to respect the silence of others. We can learn a lot by watching the impulse to talk or make other contact and seeing what motivates that impulse. At first the thought of silence may be a bit frightening, but with more practice it will become a warm haven. The silence is broken at the end of the retreat to allow people to visit and share their experiences.

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Retreat Basics

Everyone will need to bring all of your own bedding (sleeping bag or sheets, pillows), towels, hangers and personal toiletries. Blankets are provided. Plan to bring warm clothes and hiking shoes. You should bring a shawl or blanket to use while sitting in the meditation room in the early morning or evening. Plan to dress comfortably. Knoll Lodge is located adjacent to a large wooded area in which you can walk.

No meals are provided by the center. Each person attending the retreat will be asked to participate in providing food for and preparing the meals. Cost is estimated to be about \$20 each. You will be contacted prior to the retreat regarding the details. Snacks, coffee, tea and bottled water will be available at all times.

Everyone will have an assigned room. There will be two to four people in each room. If you have special room requirements, please contact the retreat managers who will to accommodate your request. You will be living in relatively close quarters. Some people are allergic to incense, scented candles, scented toiletries, aftershave and perfumes. Please refrain from bringing them to the retreat. There is no smoking inside the building.

Meditation Essentials

You should bring your own meditation cushions or whatever you use during meditation. A few cushions will be available for you to borrow. Please note that formal meditation cushions are not necessary. A folded blanket for the floor and a firm cushion on which to sit are adequate. Some chairs are available, but you will probably be more comfortable if you bring along what you know works for you. Each day will include periods of sitting and walking meditation. Instructions will be given for those relatively new to meditation. A community altar will be located in the meditation hall. You are welcome to bring anything you would like to have on the altar (for example, pictures or totems). Please take personal items home with you when you depart.

Work Assignments

There will be no work assignments during the retreat apart from preparing and cleaning up for meals. Help will also be necessary for unloading retreat supplies from cars on Friday, and for cleaning and packing back up on Sunday afternoon

If you have any questions or concerns, I can be reached by phone at (734) 369-2628 or by Email at retreat@deepspring.org.

We wish you an excellent retreat!

Your Registrar

HOW TO REACH THE HOWELL NATURE CENTER

Howell Conference and Nature Center
1005 Triangle Lake Road
Howell, MI 48843
517-546-0249

Much more, including maps and details of what is available
at the center can be found at the center website:
<http://www.howellnaturecenter.org/>

From the West or East:

- I-96 to Howell Exit 137. Also known as D-19/ Pinckney Road exit
- Turn right from the exit ramp onto D-19 (toward Pinckney) driving 4.6 miles south to Triangle Lake Rd.
- Turn right.
- The Howell Nature Center is one (1) mile on the left.
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From the North:

- US 23 to M-59
- Drive west on M-59 approximately nine (9) miles to Michigan Ave. (Also known as Oak Grove Rd.)
- Turn left at the traffic light at Michigan Ave. and M-59
- Drive through downtown Howell and over I-96. Michigan Ave. is now called D-19/ Pinckney Rd.
- Drive 4.6 miles south to Triangle Lake Rd.
- Turn right.
- The Howell Nature Center is one (1) mile on the left.
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From the South:

- US 23 to I-96 west
- Follow directions above from west -OR- US 23 to M-36
- Drive west 10.9 miles on M-36
- Turn right at sign for Howell onto D-19/Pinckney Rd. (Also know as Pearl.)
- Drive five (5) miles north on D-19 to Triangle Lake Rd.
- Turn left.
- The Howell Nature Center is one mile on the left.