



WOMEN'S SPIRITUAL RETREAT
SISTER SPIRIT
SPRING 2016 APRIL 21-24



March 2016

It's getting close! SisterSpirit is only a few weeks away! We are excitedly preparing for your arrival! This letter has directions to Saratoga Springs Retreat Center, important phone numbers to leave for the family, and a list of what to bring. *IT'S ALL IN THIS LETTER SO KEEP IT HANDY!*

Arrival: Please arrive on the land on **Thursday, April 21st, between 1:00-3:00 P.M.** to check in.

Travel time from San Jose is 3-4 hours or about 2-3 hours from San Francisco. Use the directions to the Retreat Center supplied on the next page, not your GPS system or Smartphone directions. Please plan to leave early enough to get there on time as check in will close at 3pm.

If you are interested in being in service during the retreat, there will be an informational volunteer meeting at **4:00** at the **Heart Lodge** and our get-acquainted gathering will follow at **5:00 in the Heart Lodge**. In this introductory session, we'll outline the retreat, go over housekeeping details, and then enjoy dinner. After dinner, we will have our opening ceremony and session.

Our last meal together is lunch on Sunday. Please honor your commitment to arrive on time and remain until the end of the retreat on Sunday.

Carpool: Please make your own carpool arrangements on the SisterSpirit Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/SisterSpirit>. It's fun to share a ride with someone and make a new friend while being environmentally friendly.

Meals: Chef Gary will be back again this year. If you are a vegetarian/vegan and indicated this on your registration form, there will be appropriate food choices for you. Chef Gary has been informed of any food allergies that you may have listed.

Sleeping accommodations: Bathrooms and showers in the Main Lodge and Cabins are shared. Bring towels and a washcloth, a sleeping bag or sheets/blankets and a pillow. The full list of recommended items is on the next page. PLEASE LABEL EVERYTHING!! Some women do snore, so bring earplugs if you are a light sleeper. Campers should supply all of their own camping equipment, including tent, mattress, sleeping bag, pillow, etc. If you are bringing an RV, be aware that there are no hookups. Also, no pets are allowed at Saratoga Springs Retreat Center.

Weather: The elevation at Upper Lake, California is 1348 feet. The average high temperature in April is 70 degrees (with a record high of 95). The average low is 40 degrees (with a record low of 30 degrees). Average precipitation in Upper Lake County for the month of April is 2.5 inches.

Phone numbers for family: Cell phone reception is limited or absent. (It's the mountains.)

There is a message phone in the Main Lodge, and a member of the retreat team will retrieve messages regularly. The message number is **707-275-9503**. Be sure to leave the message phone number with your family. WIFI service is spotty. We want you to focus on yourself, so prepare to be "technologically unplugged" for a few days. Your Facebook friends will understand!

Retreat spiritual leader, guest speaker & musician: **Rev. Abigail Schairer**, Spiritual Director of Center for Spiritual Living, Peninsula, Redwood City, is our retreat Spiritual Leader, main speaker, and facilitator. The very talented **Rev. Linda Reppond** is our featured guest speaker, and music for the retreat will be provided by award winning singer/song writer, **Valerie Joi Fiddmont!** Get ready for



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some powerful feminine energy, and be prepared to be surrounded by sweetness and love.

Sweat lodge: There will be sign-ups at the Heart Lodge for one of the two “sweats” in the onsite Sweat Lodge. The lodge is a dome shaped structure made of a skeleton of PVC pipes and is then covered with blankets. Hot stones are then brought in for the “sweat”. There is no fire within the sweat lodge. It is about 5’ tall and about 15’ wide. Our spiritual sweat lodge leader, **Donna Starr Donovan, RScP**, will guide you. Bring an extra towel or beach mat to sit on and a bathing suit or cotton clothing to wear in the sweat if you prefer to be covered. A sarong worn as a wrap also works.

Workshops & free time: There will be a variety of workshops to choose from where supplies will be provided. You can also choose to skip the workshops and enjoy time to bask in the sun, take a nap, read a book, journal, go to the hot tub or sweat lodge, or hike around the area!

Divine Expression Theater: Our Saturday night talent show, called Divine Expression Theater, will be your chance to try out your entertainment skills. All performance pieces (songs, dances, skits, poetry, stand-up comedy, musical solos, whatever!) are welcome for your **3 minutes** of fame. Be sure to bring any props, music, costumes, instruments, CDs, etc., that will enhance your special talents (especially sheet music if you want our fabulous musician to accompany you). Sign up for Divine Expression Theater at the Heart Lodge when you arrive at Saratoga Springs. (How many minutes will you have to perform? *Three!*)

Stepping Stones Bookstore: Martha and Jennifer will be back this year from Stepping Stones Bookstore (Santa Rosa Center for Spiritual Living) and will have a great assortment of books, clothing and gifts for your shopping pleasure. Bring a little extra money to spend on yourself.

If you are unable to attend the retreat for any reason, it is important that you contact Marylyn Kirk at 408-504-5121, or Abigail Schairer at 408-348-7568 by **TUESDAY, April 19th**, so that we won’t worry about you. **The team leaves the San Jose area as the sun rises on Wednesday, April 20th to prepare for the retreat, so it is unlikely either of us will get your message on Wednesday due to limited or non-existent cell phone reception.** If you must reach us, please call the Saratoga Springs message phone at **707-275-9503** and leave a message. If you cannot attend, but have a substitute who can, we need to know as soon as possible so appropriate arrangements can be made. Reminder: No refunds of any amount will be made if you cancel after April 6, 2016, or if your registration is not paid in full.

Our excitement and joy for this retreat has been growing and growing! We have been dreaming, planning, praying, visioning, playing, and preparing a fabulous retreat. We are ready to share with you the magic of SisterSpirit. We will see you at the Heart Lodge on Thursday, April 21st between 1:00 and 3:00!

Love,

2016 SisterSpirit Dream Team

Marylyn Kirk, Registration, Rev. Abigail Schairer, Tynya Beverly, RScP, Aileen Cureton, RScP, Kate Frias, RScP, Phyllis Gallagher, RScP, Lynda Lundry, RScP, Terri Olson, RScP, and Deirdre Myers.



Use these directions!!!





Saratoga Springs Retreat Center is located at 10243 Saratoga Springs Road, Upper Lake, CA 95485. We highly recommend using the directions below rather than your GPS system. We've learned—GPS makes it look like a shorter trip using a different route, but it will add 1-2 hours to your drive!



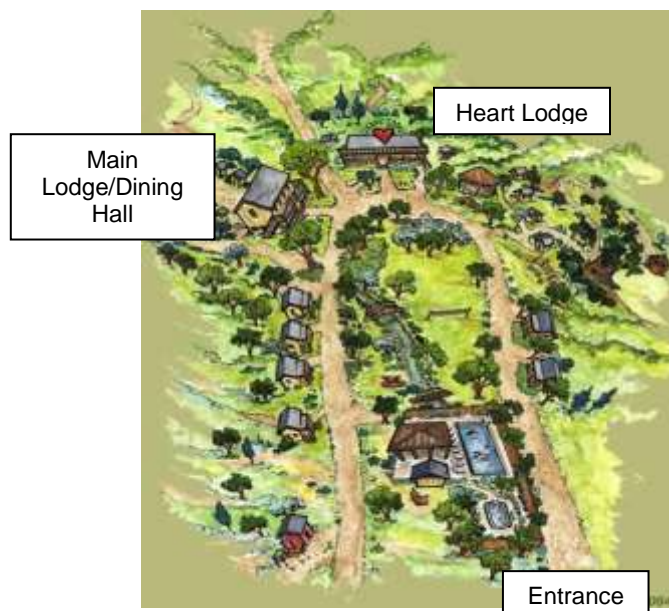
From San Jose/San Francisco:

Driving time from San Jose: **3-4 hours**

From San Francisco: **2-3 hours**

-  Take 101 North through San Francisco until you are about 5 miles past Ukiah.
-  Take Highway 20 East for about 17 miles. At 1.1 miles past Scotts Valley Road, watch for the sign for Saratoga Springs Road.
-  Turn left at Saratoga Springs Road.
-  After a short distance, turn right and drive 0.8 mile to the entrance gate to the Retreat Center.
-  Keep to the right and drive straight ahead to the Heart Lodge parking lot for registration check-in.

Grounds layout





Must-haves packing list

LABEL EVERYTHING! Blue painter's tape works well!

- Very important item:** Low backed folding chair for use in the Heart Lodge. High backed chairs will be arranged in the outer circle and the back of the room so that everyone can see. Be sure to clearly label your chair, as many chairs look alike.
- Bedding - sleeping bag or sheets and blankets and pillow
- Water bottle labeled with your name. Bottled water is available for refills in most buildings
- Layered comfortable clothing (jeans, yoga pants, shorts, tops, sweatshirts, etc.)
- Comfy shoes
- Pajamas, robe, slippers/flip flops
- Menstrual supplies (there's lots of female energy which could trigger your cycle early)
- Toiletries—shower gel/soap, shampoo, toothbrush, brush, blow dryer, etc.
- 2-3 towels, one for shower, one for hot tub/pool, and one for the sweat lodge (optional)
- Swimsuit, cover-up, river shoes or flip flops for hot tub/pool
- Warm jacket, hat, or scarf for night time or early morning walks
- Rain gear - grab a rain poncho at your nearby drug store and throw your umbrella in your pack
- Flashlight and batteries—it's really dark up there, and the stars are amazing!
- Camera, charger or batteries
- Any special dietary items. There is very limited communal refrigeration for those with special dietary needs.
- Prescription medications and emergency contact information
- Costumes, props, sheet music, etc. for the Divine Expression Theater (talent show)
- Phone calling card. The phone only accepts plastic. Cell phone reception is very limited.
- Did we mention a **folding lawn chair**? (See VERY IMPORTANT ITEM above.) Remember to **label it!**

Optional items - label these, too!

- Games (board games or outdoor games), kites, badminton or other games to share
- Objects or family pictures for our communal altar, including photos of those who have transitioned -(label them)
- Business cards or flyers for your business to share at the community table
- Drums, rattle, flutes, rain sticks, guitars, or other musical instruments for the drumming circle (label them)
- Yoga mat or towel for the ground/floor (label it)
- Commuter coffee cup (labeled) if you like to carry around your coffee/tea
- Personal art/craft materials or a book for quiet hour every day (crafts are available during this time)
- Sacred or "homey" items to embellish your room, battery operated candles are okay
- Crazy PJs, scarves, sarongs. Be yourself!
- Snack food to share with your cabin/room mates—not really needed, but fun!
- Small hand held or battery operated fan (in case it's hot) or extra blanket (in case it's cold). See weather averages above.
- Extra cash: lunch money/carpool gas money, tips for the staff, CDs/books, fun items will be available for purchase in the Stepping Stones bookstore, and cash or checkbook for pre-registration for 2017 (\$99)
- Allergy/cold medications/natural remedies—Spring weather can bring out allergies unexpectedly
- If you are allergic to bees or food items, be sure to bring your EpiPen as a precaution
- If you have sleep apnea, bring your CPAP machine and an extension cord
- Campers/RVs—bring all your own camping gear. No hookups available. No pets allowed (camp policy)
- "Pee Pot" for those in cabins without a bathroom nearby
- Headset or ear buds for any radios, etc. The walls are thin, so even if you think the volume is low, your neighbors will be able to hear (that includes conversations, so be aware of quiet hours!).

Please leave the following at home:

- Extra appliances (coffee maker, heater, etc.) as the property is old and you will trip the fuses, which is inconvenient for your house mates and dorm mates.
- Again, pets are not allowed on the property. If you have a service animal that you must bring, please contact Marylyn Kirk and discuss this with her.
- Unregistered guests - everyone must be pre-registered.
- A closed mind – nobody wants that!