

# BRIDGE CROSSING JUBILEE

## SELMA ALABAMA MARCH 3 - 6, 2017

To Oakridge travelers and parents,

March 5, 2017 is the 52nd anniversary of a pivotal event in United States History. On that day in 1965, 575 Americans led by Reverend Hosea Williams and now Representative John Lewis, walked silently in pairs from Brown Chapel in Selma, Alabama, across the Edmund Pettus Bridge, and over the Alabama River. On the other side, deployed by order of Governor George Wallace, waited Alabama State Troopers and mounted sheriff deputies. The marchers were protesting nonviolently for the right to vote, exercising their rights protected under the first amendment to the Constitution. They walked to the troopers and stopped. They were told to return to their churches. And then they were attacked. It was brutal. Troopers shot tear gas into the marchers then fell upon them with drawn clubs. Mounted sheriff deputies galloped onto the street and beat unarmed men, woman, and children. On the sidelines onlookers whooped and hollered and egged the police on. When it was over, broken and beaten bodies, mostly of young black men and women, littered the street a quarter of a mile back to the Bridge. This event became known as “Bloody Sunday”. It led to a series of two more marches across the Bridge, the second a 54 mile trek to Montgomery Alabama, and passage of a National Voting Rights Bill. Every year, these events are remembered with the Bridge Crossing Jubilee. The event honors the heroes and martyrs, who struggled in Selma in 1965 for the right to vote.

Since 2003 I’ve spent the first weekend in March in Selma, Alabama at the Bridge Crossing Jubilee. Oakridge students traveled with me in 2005, 2007, and 2009, 2013. and for the fiftieth anniversary in 2015. This year we will go again. In addition to Selma, we will visit Birmingham (Sixteenth Street Baptist Church and Kelly Ingram Park) and Montgomery (Dexter Church and the Rosa Parks Museum.) These three Alabama towns serve as axis of the Civil Rights movement. The learning opportunity for an Oakridge student to participate is tremendous.

This letter will outline expectations for students and document the trip itinerary. Parents and student travelers should check Mr. Wood’s blog [thebuddhasaidiamawake.com](http://thebuddhasaidiamawake.com) for regular updates on this event. Hopefully, this letter will clear up any questions you might have about this trip. If it doesn’t, please contact me at (616) 402-8668 or [bobwoodmsu@charter.net](mailto:bobwoodmsu@charter.net).

Thanks for joining me on this unique and empowering journey.

Mr. Wood

## **ITINERARY TO TRAVEL TO SELMA, ALABAMA MARCH 3 to 6, 2017**

### **Thursday, March 2 - Drive to and spend the night in Chicago**

We save a ton of money flying from Chicago. In addition our flight is direct and it is early on Friday morning. However, it is so early (departure 7:45 AM) that in order to catch the flight we must spend the night in Chicago near the airport. He have reserved rooms at the O'Hare Radisson. We'll depart the Oakridge parking lot at 4:00 PM, carpool to Chicago, and eat dinner and spend the night out by the airport. In the morning bright and early we will shuttle to the airport.

**This means that we will need parental assistance in the drive to Chicago Thursday and return on Monday evening March 5. We will plan drivers at the final parent meeting in February.**

### **Friday, March 3 - Fly to Birmingham, Alabama / sleep in Montgomery**

We will fly (early) from Chicago to Birmingham International Airport. We will rent a van (s) at the airport. Tour the National Civil Rights Museum in downtown Birmingham. Visit Kelly Ingram Park, site of civil rights demonstrations of the 1960's. Go to the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church which was bombed in the Fall of 63. We'll head up to Alabama Birmingham College area and eat dinner. Then drive to Montgomery - spend the night.

### **Saturday, March 4 - Selma / sleep in Montgomery**

The Bridge Crossing Jubilee is more than just a walk through history. There's all sorts of stuff planned for the weekend. There's music and street fair, good food and African arts and clothes vendors. We'll spend the day in Selma roaming town. I'll for sure introduce you all to Joanne Bland, and I will do my best to have her take us around town...she's a pretty busy lady this time of year. And hopefully, sometime that weekend we will meet with John Lewis. The Voting Rights museum has all sorts of activities planned. I will take the students on a tour of the events of 1965. For most of the day students will be able to roam on their own in Selma. Saturday night we will drive up to Marian to the grave site of Jimmie Lee Jackson.

### **Sunday, March 5 - Selma / sleep in Montgomery**

The morning begins with ministers of the Civil Rights movement speaking at local churches - Rev CT Vivian, Rev James Webb, Rev Jesse Jackson and more. Everybody is welcomed to attend. At noon hundreds, sometimes thousands of people meet at the Brown Chapel. There are speeches and prayers, and people together head off to the Bridge. They retrace the march from Brown across the Edmund Pettus Bridge on Bloody Sunday. Adults, kids, high school students, grannies and grandkids - black, white, and brown people all walk together. Some people sing, some walk quietly and reminisce - some walk together, some alone. Across the Bridge there are speeches and prayers. And the Jubilee is over, even though the street fair continues on til sundown.

### **Monday, March 4 - Selma to Montgomery to Birmingham to Chicago**

In Montgomery we will visit the Rosa Parks Museum and go to the Dexter Street Church where King was minister during the Montgomery Bus Boycott. We will go to the Civil Rights memorial designed by Maya Lin - the same person who designed the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. We will then continue on to

Birmingham and fly home. You must be in school on Tuesday morning no matter the time we get in. The absence will be school related only if you attend a full day of school on Tuesday March 6.

### **Mandatory Parent Meetings**

We will have two mandatory parent meetings in regard to the Selma trip. One will be October; we will go over trip costs and logistics. The other will be in February before we go on the trip. We will set up carpools to the airport for flights in and out.

### **Stephen B. Oates - "Let the Trumpet Sound."**

Students will also be encouraged to read their own copy of "Let the Trumpet" Sound by Stephen B. Oates. I have purchased several copies that you may borrow. In addition, my Government class highlights issues of Selma in the study of the Civil Rights movement. You need to know all that you can about the events of the movement to fully comprehend the places and people we are going to see. No way do you just run off to Alabama and join in a celebration of the events of the Civil Rights Movement without first taking an intellectual trip back to the day.

### **Final Bill and Fundraising Opportunities**

We will fly group travel to Selma - that requires a \$50 deposit at time of airline booking. In 2015 we booked the first week in November. That deposit is refundable until we make the final commitment. In 2015 that commitment was around Christmastime. Final payment for the airfare was due February 1. Final balance for the trip was due on Valentines Day - February 14. Our timetable this year will be similar.

Our last trip to Selma the final bill was \$585. That included Air Fare, Museums and Hotel Stays, and transportation in Alabama - everything but food and the Selma Street Fair. And remember we will be staying at a hotel with breakfast included. Our final bill will depend on hotel costs and airfare, which could cause the final cost to go up or down. However, this is pretty close to what I expect the final bill to be. As for fundraising, Selma students are pretty much on their own. I will help with flyers. Pop and bottle drives are recommended. However, I need to spend a majority of my fundraising time with Close Up travelers since the price tag is considerably higher. If you are going on both trips, you may fundraise with Close Up and use your savings for either trip. If you have particular financial challenges in regard to the trip please see me and we will see if other options are available. In the end, fundraising is up to YOUR efforts. Not mine or mom's.

*This trip is open to all Oakridge seniors and juniors who adhere to the Participant Guideline form that accompanies this handout.*

**ANY QUESTIONS - [bobwoodmsu@gmail.com](mailto:bobwoodmsu@gmail.com)  
/ (616) 402-8668 / <http://www.thebuddhasaidiamawake.com/>**