

Family—It's Not Just Blood

Nicky Hoffman

Webster defines a gathering as an occasion when people come together as a group, and a reunion as an organized gathering of people who have not been together for a long time. Combined, that is exactly what happens each June when we come together for the Eastern Naturist Gathering. It's more than coming together as a group; it's a reunion of friends who have not been together for some time—for many of us an entire year has passed. And what a reunion it is.

For Carmen and I, the gathering begins months before the actual event. Planning usually starts in January and continues until that last workshop offering arrives—usually just after we have the schedule printed.

We leave Oshkosh on Saturday morning and stop for the night a little over halfway to Poyntelle so we can have a shorter drive on Sunday, get a good night's sleep and then set up early Monday morning and wait for our family to begin arriving.

People start showing up early Monday morning and continue to arrive all week long. For many this is their yearly vacation, for others a beginning of the long summer of mini-vacations. For all of us—a reunion.

Each year we see improvements at the camp, and this year was no exception. They've painted and spruced up all over the place, but with the spring rains unfortunately not everything was completed by the time we arrived. We endured the tar trucks all week long and the off and on rain as usual. But the weather never gets us down for long and the friendship and camaraderie I experience every year at our gatherings is inspiring.

All the workshops are offered by you—the members—and they get better every year. A big thank you to each and every one of you. We had a few new ones this year and they were a huge success. Those of you who arrived early enjoyed the fun and laughter Monday evening as we discussed real and fictional laws from all across the United States. Don't forget to bring your unusual laws next year.

Several of the ukulele jam sessions were held in the dining hall due to the rain. Those of us working at check in didn't complain, as we were able to enjoy the wonderful music emanating from the corner of the dining hall. What a pleasure!

The morning Qi Gong and the STAR Tech stretching workshops were a huge success as was the Basic Meditation Techniques.



Carl

Above: Everyone is gathering for the group photo.



Right: Barry Bailey doing a workshop on Male Pelvis Wellness.

Bottom: Mike Horgan addressing the Town Hall meeting.



Ron Marsh



Ron Marsh

Beer tasting with a wide variety of brews.

Thanks to Robin Stapley and Barry Bailey for offering these workshops each year and to Charles Myers for the added meditation workshop. The stretching really gets everyone up, feeling good, and moving about.

We added some line dancing and belly dancing to the schedule this year and hopefully these will continue every year. Perhaps next year we can get a line dancing demonstration added to Star Search?

I heard good reports about the Kumihimo Braiding Workshop, too. Everyone is looking forward to learning more techniques next year.

The beer tasting, with its wide variety of brews, was a huge success as always and although it failed to make the schedule we all enjoyed a bit of wine tasting as Bob Fuss, author of *Kidnapped by Nuns* read us excerpts from his entertaining book.

Wonderful music could be heard coming from the canteen every night from Wednesday through Saturday provided for us by Mike Flanagan—DJ extraordinaire.

And speaking of Star Search—it was a blockbuster supernova!



Ron Marsh

Rain delayed crews from finishing up improvements before the gathering.



Ron Marsh

STAR Search clarinet/piano duet by Ross & Nancy Stevenson.

From the amazing vocals of our host Bob Smith who sang several numbers, including my favorite “What I did for Love,” to the Vinyassa Yoga performed by Karen Kapus, the piano of Kathy Rice, amazing guitar and vocal performed by father/daughter Jim

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Carmen

Arnett and Sarah Elizabeth to the clarinet/piano duet by Ross & Nancy Stevenson we were all enthralled. The show continued with a guitar and vocal by Christopher Dyer and Sarah Elizabeth, to the very first trumpet solo by Sean Burwen accompanied by his father Pete, to Stan Ware and Chuck Trueman performing "You Better Shape Up" and a vocal performance by Laurel Dyer. We enjoyed a modern dance by Barry Bailey, song by Fred Shuman, the comedy of Colleen, piano and vocal by Sean's father Pete, belly dancing by our own Sarah Elizabeth, Eric Fleischer on the autoharp, Stanley and the Steamers performed for us as well as Ron Marsh, David Heimann and Kath Rooney.

Bob Smith and a wonderful crew of volunteers put the show together: Kath Rooney, Ben Alexander, Pete Burwen and Rob Dumais. What a wonderful cast of characters. Thank YOU.

Remarks by Stanley Ware:

Upon returning home from this year's Eastern Gathering, I gave thanks. I'm grateful I have been with you my naked family. For 21 years I have met with you wherever the party is. I am grateful to share my visions with you and to watch you grow. The memories are priceless. Through the workshops I have met folk I admire.

You know Dancing Naked is Heaven on Earth for me. Performing in Star Search yearly, now allows me to live my truth. Walking through Center City Philly, with my sleeveless flowered sack dresses or skirts daily... Because I can...no wigs, just a turban on my head...Life passes like a cloud over the sea, here, there and gone. All we can do is cling together for a while, remember the pleasures and give thanks for the passage: written by some one? God bless Lisa...

On Saturday, despite the rain, Carmen and Bryon ventured to the lake for some swimming and bouncing around on the water trampoline. I understand that Carmen assisted Bryon in his training for his participation in Sharkfest this past August in San Francisco.

Several days after arriving back in Oshkosh we received word of the passing of Lisa Flanagan. We will honor her at the Eastern Nativist Gathering in June 2016. **N**

*The soul of a gypsy,
the heart of a hippie
and the spirit of a fairy.*



Lisa A. Flanagan

July 29, 1963 - June 25, 2015

