Commune under the moon

A three-day women's music and cultural festival near Ashland gives cause for celebration

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by Inga Sorensen

It's called "Full Moon in June," and it's designed to give women a chance to celebrate each other. "Full Moon in June," which runs June 9 to 11, is a three-day women's music and cultural festival sponsored by WomanSource and Southern Oregon Hearth, two organizations dedicated to the promotion and preservation of women's culture.

"This event is unique in that there are so many different types of women artists who will be performing: poets, musicians, craftswomen, writers, dancers. It's a wonderful mixture and it's all aimed at celebrating women," says Katya Blissenbach of Southern Oregon Hearth, a women's cultural exchange, which previously produced three women's cultural festivals in southern Oregon. WomanSource, meanwhile, has a 22-year herstory of promoting women's gatherings. This marks the first year the two organizations have combined their efforts to sponsor a major women's cultural event.

PHOTO BY CHICK RICE

Chrystos

"I think it's always important for women to have a chance to come together, but given the current political climate, it may be even more vital this year," says Blissenbach, adding the festival will be held at Camp Low Echo, a Girl Scout camp about 40 minutes from Ashland. Local and regional musicians and artists will perform, and a diverse array of workshops focusing on such subjects as poetry, writing, massage, two-step dancing, relationships and self-defense will be offered.

Featured performers include Chrystos of the Menominee Nation, a lesbian poet and activist who travels extensively giving political speeches and readings for queer rights; Musica Femina, the flute and guitar duo of Kristan Aspen and Janna MacAuslan, who perform classical compositions interspersed with original and herstorical pieces by women composers; nationally known percussionist Carolyn Brandy; Alice DiMicele, a contemporary acoustic singer/songwriter with roots in the natural world; Rashida Oji, a singer and songwriter who performs rap, gospel, folk, reggae and rock; comedian Carol Steinel; and Olga Loya, a versatile storyteller who tells tales both in English and Spanish.

Special guests include Celtic harpist Shelley Phillips, local musician and artist Annie Ocean, vocalist Windsong, Arcata folk team Francine and Nymiah, and others.

Registration is limited to 300 women. Sliding-scale cost for three days and nights of camping, entertainment, workshops and vegetarian/vegan meals is $100 to $150. Girls and boys up to the age of 6 are welcome to attend for a sliding-scale fee of $10 to $20. Children under 3 are free. There will be some activities for children, but no organized child care will be provided. No dogs or other pets are allowed. In deference to women with environmental intolerances, no strong scents or perfume are allowed, either. Girl Scout rules prohibit nudity and the use of alcohol or drugs on the property. For more information, call WomanSource at 488-8445.

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