

CULTURE

Get outta town!

Just Out finds some far-flung queer summer fun

BY MARY ANN PETERSEN

It's hot enough to fry a veggie burger on your tailgate. The air quality in the cities is taking a dive, and your beagle will never speak to you again if you don't get her out to the country. It's a great time to break out your map and do a little exploring. Who says camp is just for kids?

The Kalles Family Ranch is a gay and lesbian campground located in Tiller, Ore., 60 miles north of Medford and 28 miles east of Canyonville.

When Anne and Reilly Kalles decided to call their dream a plan, they found and purchased the ranch, fixed it up and created a space where, they say, "our gay brothers and lesbian sisters can come to visit and feel safe while camping with their lovers."

The ranch features a huge outdoor pavilion with a full kitchen, and a big fire pit. To make reservations, call (541) 825-3271, or visit the Internet site www.kallesfamily.com.

While you can make individual reservations, there are three special weekends planned for this summer.

July 14-16: Labrys Women's Group from Ashland, Ore., camps at the ranch for the second year in a row; other women's groups are also welcome. Individual camping open to women; closed to men for this weekend only.

July 28-30: Men-only weekend at the Kalles ranch. This time, the men get a chance to enjoy one another at this campground that borders 597 acres of the Umpqua National Forest.

Aug. 11-13: Annual Clean and Sober Weekend at the Kalles Family Ranch, includes Saturday potluck dinner.

The Outdoor Group, based in Eugene, started as "a group of gay and lesbian people who wanted to go hiking," says lead

organizer Kim Smith. Now the group has "taken on a community service role, in terms of letting people know what's going on."

The Outdoor Group offers a large variety of activities, including road trips throughout the state about two or three times a year, spending several days camping, hiking and sharing meals together. The group strives to be welcoming to all members of the community.

For more information, call (541) 273-2838 or go to www.outdoorgroup.org.

July 16: The group hikes to Vivian Lake. Near Salt Creek Falls in the Oregon Cascades, this moderate, six-mile round trip passes near some charming waterfalls and ends up at the beautiful Vivian Lake. Meet in Eugene to carpool to the trail head. For more information, contact Terry at tallen@rio.com.

Aug. 6: The group hikes at Opal Creek. This "gem of the Cascades" is located about 40 miles east of Salem, on the way to Santiam Pass. The easy, five-mile round trip wanders past historic mining operations and through old-growth forests to a deep, rock-strewn chasm through which crystal-clear Opal Creek flows. Meet at 10 a.m. at the Beanery, Fifth Avenue and Olive Street in Eugene, to carpool to the trail head. Bring a lunch, water, sunscreen, a hat, appropriate shoes and clothing.

Aug. 11-13: The Rainbow Wranglers square dance group holds its first Cross Trail Through Eugene Camp-In on private property near Marcola (just north of Springfield). Be

prepared for dancing, camping and hiking. To learn more, contact David at (541) 747-0721.

Aug. 12-21: Ever wanted to run naked through the woods? Here's your chance! Check out the annual Radical Faerie gathering at the Nomenus Sanctuary in southern Oregon near Wolf Creek. Activities scheduled for this year's fabulous gathering include mask making, a costume parade, a tent site decorating contest, the first fabulous faerie olympics, a late night disco dance (in the wilderness, no less), a Mardi Gras celebration and other fun events.

For more information, visit www.lamMag.com/Gathering2000.html.

Klamath Area Lambda Association is the gay and lesbian community group for the Klamath Falls area. Aside from planning camp-outs, members also have a summer dance and meet for weekly volleyball games. This year they combine with a group from the Abdill-Ellis Lambda Community Center in nearby Ashland for the camp-out and picnic, for which they "are banking on even more hilarity" than last year. For additional information, call (541) 273-2838.

Aug. 18-20: KALA camp-out at Lake of the Woods, located off Highway 140W between Klamath Falls and Medford. A picnic will be held on Saturday at the Rainbow Bay picnic area, beginning at noon. Call to reserve your campsite. Men, women and children are invited to attend.

"Last year the event followed the release of *The Blair Witch Project*, which led to campers sneaking through the dark to scare the daylights out of each other," says Amy Diver of KALA.

Aug. 27: Mark your calendars now for the South Coast PFLAG Millennium Family Picnic. This fabulous event is held at Tugman State Park, just south of Reedsport on Highway 101. Family is celebrating from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. To get more info, contact Ken Folker at (541) 888-6497.

Finally, if all these ideas seem too tame, too predictable, how about a weekend in Oz?

Two gay guys, Gene Carsey Jr. and Mike Craven, run an eclectic roadside attraction called the Funny Farm, located seven miles north of Bend, Ore. As part of their enterprise, you can book a stay at the Wizard of Oz Bed and Breakfast.

From the moment you are given the house keys (on Ray Bolger's personal key chain), you'll discover many delights, including copies of all the Oz books, videos of most of the Oz films ever made and autographs from the MGM classic. If you really get into role playing, costumes for all the Oz characters are available!

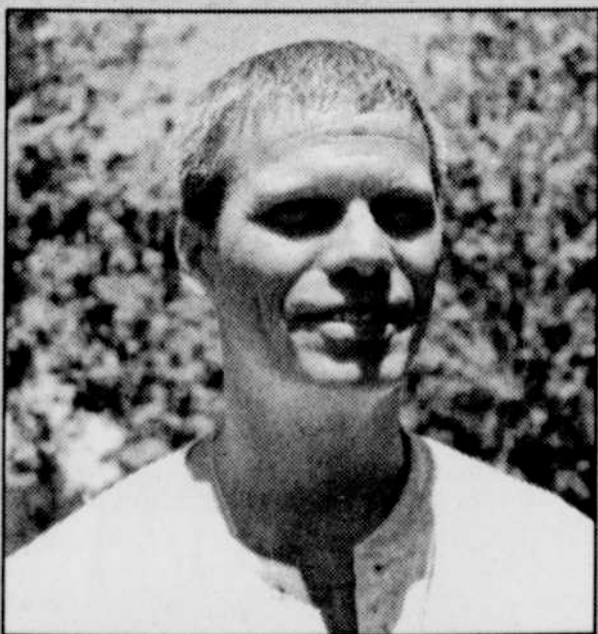
The house itself is unique, since it is surrounded by a moat, and you can draw the bridges up behind you for complete privacy. In the summer there's a guests-only pond for swimming. Call (541) 389-6391 for directions or visit the Internet at www.funfarm.com.

■ MARY ANN PETERSEN is a Eugene-based freelance writer who finds all these events quite tempting.

Looking for fun in all the right places

PHOTOS BY MARY ANN PETERSEN

While milling about June 25 in the Eugene pride festival crowd, I decided to chat with folks and ask what sort of queer event they would like to attend or create this summer.

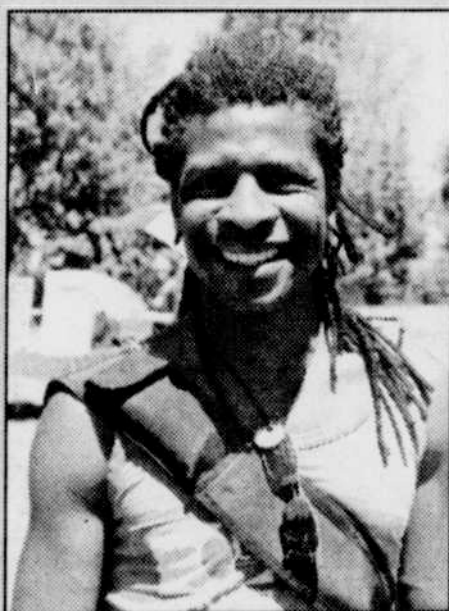


MATTHEW NELSON

"I would love to go to the queer camp-out at Whistler, B.C."

BONNIE BERMAN

"A whole bunch of women going to the beach!"



EDEN OMARI

"I would clearly, clearly, clearly like to get together about 20 men, with my partner, go up the Oregon coast, rent some lodging somewhere and

stay on the beach the whole weekend and just love each other. But, I don't mean as an orgy."

FRANCHESKAH SLAUGHTER

"Get out of a damn dress. I feel like I've spent all spring and summer in a damn dress. I'd also like to spend a day at a lake where you had a whole bunch of things going on, like water-skiing and swimming."



SALLY SHEKLOW

"There's a women's improv festival that we're going to in August, and we'll be the dyke group representation, so that will be fun. Also, I just want to find some nice swimming hole and jump in naked!"

HANK ALLEY

"I'm going to a writer's conference in Napa Valley; I'm writing a gay novel. One of the featured writers is Michael Cunningham, a gay novelist who received the Pulitzer Prize last year."



DAWN LOOMIS, WITH MUFFIN

"A statewide 'Lesbopalooza' where a bunch of queer women play music—well-known and not well-known."

NIKKI WILLIAMS

"I'm with Dawn in promoting queer music, especially in smaller towns, even smaller than



KARA YETISHEFSKY, WITH SHILOH

"I would want to see a lesbian bar open up in Corvallis."