

Get-away provides something fun, new

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When I was given the chance to participate in the Women's Get-Away Weekend, I jumped at the opportunity with much excitement and a little apprehension.

I had never been to the women's weekend before, and had no idea what to expect. Hopefully, this would turn out to be an adventure.

The weekend turned out to be more than I expected. From the time I arrived it was "go, go, go." Friday night's welcoming session was like a gun going off at the Kentucky Derby. There were so many things to do, and only two days to do them.

This year's retreat highlighted creativity, relaxation, and renewal. Weekend workshops included writing, art, music, massage, and line dancing.

In addition to the workshops, there were massage therapists on hand for anyone who wanted a massage. I had the opportunity to experience my first professional massage. The event also featured song circles where anyone could request songs and sing along if they wanted.

Most of the weekend I spent listening and talking with some of the women at the retreat. For many it was their first experience with such an event, also.

For one woman, this was her first time ever away from her children. In the process of separating from her husband she had come to the retreat for a new experience. By the end of the week-

end she had learned to line dance and had performed in the Shy Singers' Chorus.

A mother who had suffered a stroke last fall came with her daughter. The mother ended up learning to line dance, play a harmonica, and also sang in the Saturday night concert.

I shared a cabin with four other women, two who were sisters in their 60's. One lived in Seaside and had come to Portland to see her sister and attend the event with her.

The age and diversity of the women was incredible. Ages ranged from early 20's to early 70's. There were teachers, homemakers, students, retirees, and women in recovery, to name a few. No matter what the profession or the age, all of the women discovered they were talented in something new.

Saturday Night's talent show reflected the newly-learned talents the women had acquired during the day's workshops. The show was uproariously funny. I haven't laughed so hard and had that much fun in years. Performances were given by the harmonica band, the poetry band, the percussion band, two line dancing groups, and one woman performed a piece from the *Anthony and Cleopatra* opera. There was also a demonstration of Shiatsu massage techniques.

The talent of the performers ranged from beginner to experienced. When these individuals all came together the performances were fantastic. The laughter from the audience was genuine as most

were participants themselves. Every act received a huge round of applause and everyone had a great time.

After the talent show came the concert by *Motherlode*. Normally a group of four, last weekend they were a trio, as member Kathleen Fallon is on sabbatical. It didn't matter, as members Nan Collie, Janet Peterson and Marie Eaton compensated beautifully.

The performance was moving and powerful. The lyrics invoked feelings that ranged from funn, to intense and heart-wrenching. Complementing the lyrics were instruments including guitars, bass, mandolin and harmonica. Their songs were like poetry set to music. One song, *Never Forget*, deeply affected the audience; I know it affected me. It is not yet recorded, but should be on *Motherlode's* next album.

In addition to performing concerts, the members of *Motherlode* also participated in the weekend by hosting the workshops in music. Members of *Motherlode* have been involved with the event since its beginning in 1989; this was the 7th women's weekend.

The weekend came to a close Sunday afternoon and it was time to go back home. I had made new friends, gotten very little sleep and taken lots of pictures. A few of us had even made a little sense out of our lives. Next year us "Newbies" will be returning veterans at the Women's Weekend Get-Away and I'm bringing lots more film.



Motherlode member Nan Collie tunes her guitar before Saturday night's performance.



The percussion band shows off their newly learned rhythm skills.



Get-Away participant gets ready for Sunday's art show.



Coordinators of the Women's Weekend open the event Friday night. From left are Linda Vogt, Bernie Nolan, Marilynne Keyser, Maggie Pedersen, Rene' Zingarelli and Kate Gray.



(above) Poet Band Member Susan McElheran reads from her works.



(right) Michelle Mercer and Verla Buren explore new forms of art.



(Below) Clackamas staff member Janet Quinn shows off her newly-acquired line dancing skills at the Saturday night concert.