

History of the Hippies of Takilma

By
Kindi Fahrnkopf
IVN Contributing Writer

Part 14-The Out ‘n About Treehouse Resort

Michael G. had the inspired vision of making money off the trees by not cutting them down, when he “assumed those Fantasy Flakes” in 1978. Gemini Bill came up with the name, and Michael created the box of “The Ethereal Serial-Breakfast of Geniuses.” Michael built a prototype of his “Picture Propeller” out of wood and took it to the Renaissance Faire, where it fired up people’s imagination. Michael had tried to make a living tree planting, horse logging, and as a medic but he found he didn’t have quite the temperament for internal medicine. He was more of an emergency medic. As Michael remembers, “People wanted to be fixed, so I went back 100 years and created a feel good bottle. The main remedy was a song, a dance and laughter. I saw the magic and myth of medicine and decided to become a “MDGQ; a Mighty Damn Good Quack.” So that was the birth of the Dr. Birch’s Medicine Show which Michael performed for several years and even took on the road to the Four Corners of the West. Michael’s Medicine Shows and plays were some of the most memorable events in the valley. He and Charlie Two Shoes had a Laurel and Hardy act, which could split your sides with belly laughs. The ragtime piano playing by Dave K. and troupe of can-can dancers made it one hell of a show.

In 1985 he partnered with Richard H. of Bright Star productions and put on an old fashioned melodrama called “Dirty Works at the Crossroads” at the old theatre in Cave Junction. Michael played the villain Murgatroyd, to poor, sweet Nellie who was tied to the railroad tracks in one of the most realistic scenes ever created in such a small play. The house was packed with enthusiastic

hippies, but it was later learned that some were arrested outside for unknown reasons.

In later years, Michael co-wrote a play called “Where’s Waldo”, about the wild, west history of the gold rush town of Waldo and had a troupe of hippies perform it at the Lions Labor Day event, on a temporary stage, where it inspired wild enthusiasm from the crowd.

So Michael continues with his story, “I came here for medicine but the valley needed a source of income and people needed better living conditions. I kept trying different things. I wanted to make a living off living trees.” He built the first tree house for his kids and it was a hit. In 1990 he re-built the Peacock House with Doug K’s design and started renting it out as a bed and breakfast. “I put metal on the tree and then wood on the metal. It was different.” He saw that it could make money. He added, “All the things that didn’t work are a part of it now, but it was the tree houses that made it happen. People really enjoyed themselves, and it was like preventative medicine; very relaxing on a beautiful piece of property. I liked building things and success is being able to afford making a living at what you like to do.” Slowly, one by one the different tree houses were built, and now the “Treesort” is sold out each summer season and provides many jobs for locals. It is a place where “tree-history” sort-of started, with the development of the resort and its attractions. Today it has 15 unique and different treehouses, and hosts activities like hiking, rafting, horse-back riding and zip lines.

Every 4th of July Out ‘n About sponsors the annual Takilma slow-pitch softball game, down on Michael’s lower field. This event always starts at noon, as players are chosen for the teams, called the Tater Heads and the Geezers. This often comical and amazing spectacle (pitting young bravado against the wisdom of experience) is very well attended by hippie regulars and lots of summer

visitors. It is followed that evening by a huge 4th of July spectacular fireworks show and outdoor dance concert. This event has gotten bigger every year and attracts people from all over the region. Nobody can doubt that the Treesort is a groovy place and adds to the stability of Takilma. More information on the resort is found at www.treehouses.com.

In fact Michael G.s vision has expanded in the years since his Treesort became popular, to helping others succeed as well. He helped long time friend Sandy L. get into the bed and breakfast business by helping her build the “Lily Pad” treehouse in the tall trees on her land. Now she can earn a living without leaving home and the Treesort books her treehouse with visitors all year long. These kind of collaborations have always been a strength of the people of Takilma where they have always been helpful to their neighbors.

The people of Takilma had always come together to work on issues they cared about and took steps which were innovative. In 1983, after a community meeting in which the residents were polled, 70% of the population of Takilma voted yes on a TCA resolution to create a Nuclear-Free Zone in Takilma. They were the first community in Josephine County, and perhaps the whole country, to do this.

In 1984, many of the same people marched through the streets of Cave Junction on a Peace March sponsored by the Women’s Initiative for Peace,

to bring attention to the continuing cost and escalation of wars across the world. Since then a group called “Women In Black” have been standing for peace each Monday at noon in front of the County Building to express their opposition to war in a peaceful, silent manner.

The idea of a Blackberry Festival started long ago, in the 80’s when two businessmen in Cave Junction, Les L. and Jim F., found out that Holland boasted the longest continuous blackberry hedge in Oregon and as such deserved some special recognition. So to boost their sales in mid-August they proposed a street fair where vendors would mingle their wares with those of the business people, who could bring a table to the sidewalk. This kind of shameless promotion was made fun with blackberry jam, jelly and pie contests. The Blackberry Festival has survived as an event which still helps support small businesses, and craftspeople in Cave Junction. In recent years, the Illinois River Valley Arts Council has sponsored a monthly Artwalk event which showcases artwork and music

in Cave Junction businesses.

The Takilma Community Building continues to provide a venue and a focal point, not only for the Dome School but for all of the residents of the area. Parties can rent the space and the kitchen facilities, because the school furniture is on rollers and can be moved for multiple uses. Katherine continues to work at the Dome School as a teacher and takes people out on tours in the summer. She reveals her feelings, “This is a very special area, and I take people on horseback tours at Out ‘n About in the summers, and people are amazed at this area. We are stewards of this area. I’ve spent many years hiking, and I’ve lived here so long now, I feel like I am the forest. I’ve found so much satisfaction here; never bored, the beauty always amazes me.”

Author Kindi Fahrnkopf is a poet and flower child of the 60’s who has lived in Takilma for 33 years. She moved to Cave Junction in 1979 with her husband and two little children to open the Cave’s Cobbler shoe repair and Birkenstock shop.



A stress test with 80 people in one of the first tree houses, at Out ‘n About. (Photo Courtesy of Robert Hirning for the *Illinois Valley News*.)

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Shift Fest & potluck Lunch at the community lodge

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1:00 - 2:30 pm
A New Paradigm for Humanity 12 Step Programs / The Four Agreements / NVC and other Spiritual & Practical Programs for personal growth and cultural liberation. Presentation with Round robin to maximize participation.

TBA pm Gathering of the Tribes Meeting. Recap on highlights of earlier sessions. TOPICS INCLUDE: Tribal Democracy / Wisdom 'fun'amentals / Rally of the Tribes, Dream Team Creation, Freedom Mission with Declaration of Commitment to indigenous peoples and one another.

Sunday
8:30 Meditation Session / 9 - 10 am Spirit Gathering Prayer & Sharing Circle

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