

OLYMPUS NEWS

A newsletter for Olympus Campground Resort

Winter—Spring 2019

Welcome to Issue 2

Welcome to the second edition of the Olympus Campground Resort Newsletter. We are still researching possible locations in Virginia for our campground resort. In the meantime, we are hosting semi-regular events through the Hampton Roads Men's group and Alternatives HR. Currently, most events take place in Hampton Roads, Virginia.

What is this newsletter about?

This newsletter will mostly be providing updates about events we are hosting and any progress made toward founding Olympus Campground Resort. Sometimes we will publish other articles of interest, especially if they relate to any of our events. We may also review other campgrounds and gatherings similar to those we'd like to host when our campground becomes a reality.

Additionally, we're looking for a catchy name for our newsletter that somehow matches our theme. If you have ideas, please send them.

What is Olympus Campground Resort?

Olympus Campground Resort will be a private, alternative, adults-only campground located somewhere in Virginia. The campground will be a merging of LGBTQ and Pagan campgrounds with some fetish and other alternative communities thrown in.

Visit our webpage: www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/

Upcoming events:

Brotherhood by the Bog Pagan Men's Retreat : "Brotherhood Across the Boundaries: Valuing Our Diverse Tribes"

April 11-14, 2019 at the campsites in First Landing State Park in Virginia Beach.

Arcadia Gathering: "Empowering Queer Pagan Men's Spirituality"

October 9-12, 2019 at Bear Creek Lake State Park, Cumberland, VA

For more info on both events:
(click on the events tab)

www.olympuscampgroundresort.com



Photo from the original Brotherhood Across the Boundaries Retreat at First Landing State Park in 2004

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Lost Boys Found a Home

The weekend of March 23-25, 2018, Hampton Roads Pagan Men held its annual Brotherhood by the Bog men's cabin retreat at First Landing State Park in Virginia Beach. This year's theme was "Lost Boys and Neverlands: Creating Magickal Connections in a Mundane World." This year's guest presenter was Eric Eldritch – a Radical Faerie, Urban Shaman, and Stone Circle Wicca Priest, who lives at the intersection of Sexuality and Spirituality.

The jovial tone of the weekend involved Peter Pan, Lost Boys, Pirates, and Adventure, but the weekend was also serious. Within the theme, participants focused on finding and connecting with their tribe(s), rediscovering the magick within, and achieving a balance between their inner adult and their inner child. A main activity of the weekend was using index cards to explore these various parts of one's life, not just in the present, but also in the past and where one hopes to be in the future. Participants were given small treasure chests to keep their cards. Other activities included hiking, a fireside ceremony highlighting male archetypes and the appointing of "Lost Boy Names," and a ritual honoring ancestors at the Native American Burial Mound within the park. Participants also stumbled upon Earth Hour activities that were held in the park. Earth Hour is a dedicated hour where people, businesses, and parks turn off the lights for one hour and celebrate the diversity of life on earth. The activities at First Landing included live music and crafts.

The Lost Boys had this to say about their visit in the cabin guest journal:

We the tribe of Lost Boys, have really enjoyed our stay here. Your bogs are mysterious and wondrous, much like where we're from (minus the pirates). Thanks for letting us stay the weekend to carry on our adventures and discover lost treasures without fear of reprisal. Take care of the bog for us. We may be back sooner than you think.

Your Lost Boys,

"Strummer" Boy

"Sparkly!"

"Pinty"

"Dreamer Boy"

"Bogly"

"Clearly Now"

Attendees at the Lost Boys and Neverlands-Men's Retreat Weekend.

Left to Right:

Roger Scott

David Coffman

Charles Gnilka

Michael Vitale

Eric Eldritch

Not Pictured:

Mel Frizzell



Alternative Pride Picnic Offers a Relaxed Day in the Park

Alternatives HR held our 2nd annual “Alternative Pride Picnic” on Saturday, July 7, 2018. The picnic was started last year to offer an Alternative pride event that is non-corporate and focused on the local community. The picnic also offers a safe space for marginalized folks within the LGBTQ community, as well as others who are not quite mainstream.

It was a perfect day for a picnic. Unlike the extremely hot day at the Hampton Roads PrideFest the weekend before, temperatures were mild in the upper 70s. While the morning rain showers may have turned some folks away, the rain was over by the time the picnic started at noon. The day was mostly cloudy though the sun did peek out in the afternoon. A cool breeze also kept the weather mild.

The picnic was mostly low key and relaxed. There were games like “corn hole toss” and Frisbee. DJ Jessica provided a mix of music throughout the day. Folks mostly enjoyed the chance to hang out and socialize. There were a couple of sponsor tables. **Nothing Bundt Cakes** provided cake and the **Transgender Assistance Program** provided chips. Two other sponsors had last minute emergencies and were unable to attend. Alternatives HR provided hot dogs, veggie hot dogs, buns, and condiments.



Scenes from the Alternative Pride Picnic.

Top Left: De Sube and the Transgender Assistance Program helped sponsor the picnic.

Top Right: Folks enjoyed the food and the low key nature of the picnic.

Bottom Left: DJ Jessica provided music for the event.



Members of TSC complete their Shine On lighting project at Mystic Moon.

Love Blossoms in the Spring

Alternatives HR held our Love Blossoms Masquerade Ball on Saturday, April 7, 2018 at the Hershee Bar in Norfolk. The masquerade was co-sponsored by the Hershee Bar and Aries Apothecary. The event featured a DJ, silent auction, a cash bar, and a masquerade costume contest. All "alternative" people and relationships were welcome including LGBTQ folks, Pagans, Poly folks, and fetish communities. Money raised will go toward funding the 2nd annual Alternative Pride Picnic to be held July 7 at the picnic shelter at First Landing State Park.

Tidewater Spirit Coalition to Co-sponsor Brotherhood by the Bog

The Tidewater Spirit Coalition signed on as co-sponsor for Brotherhood by the Bog 2019. The Tidewater Spirit Coalition is a Hampton Roads men's group that promotes community involvement through various community projects. The group is mostly Pagan, but really open to anyone who believes in supporting local community.

Brotherhood by the Bog is an annual Pagan men's retreat that takes place in the spring at First Landing State Park in Virginia Beach. The upcoming retreat will be held on April 11-14, 2019. Different from the past two retreats that took place in cabins, this year's retreat will be a camping retreat. Camping was chosen to keep registration costs down in the hopes of encouraging more participation from local men. Camping also allowed the event to add an extra day to the event without breaking the bank.

This year's theme is "Brotherhood Across the Boundaries: Valuing Our Diverse Tribes." The theme was chosen in a poll last summer and seemed especially relevant in today's divisive political climate. While politics won't be specifically discussed, the event will give folks a chance to understand other Pagan spiritual paths, folks of various sexual orientations, and other differences. The "Brotherhood Across the Boundaries" theme was used once before in a 2004 retreat. It seemed a good time to revive it for a new generation of retreat goers.

This year will feature a musical guest rather than a speaker facilitating the entire weekend. This opens the way for workshops and activities presented by planners and attendees. The musical guest for the weekend is Sir Hex Nottingham. Hex was raised as a Shield Knight and Priest of the Loyal Arthurian Warband by Arthur Pendragon in Stonehenge. He is a student of the Order of Bards, Ovates, and Druids, and also a member of the Ancient Order of Druids in America. Hex was appointed as Principle Drummer of the Stonehenge Druids. He is also a lifelong Witch. At this year's retreat, Hex will facilitate a workshop on "Tribal Drumming" and will lead a drum circle on the beach.

To find out more about Brotherhood by the Bog:

www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/index.php/events/brotherhood-by-the-bog-pagan-men-s-retreat



Tribal logo for the weekend created by Sage Haver of the Tidewater Spirit Coalition.



Photo from the 2004 Brotherhood Across the Boundaries Retreat.

Arcadia Gathering for Queer Pagan Men

by Mel Mystery

The first annual Arcadia Gathering for Queer Pagan Men will be held October 9-12, 2019 at Bear Creek Lake State Park in Cumberland, Virginia. The theme of the first gathering is "Discovering Arcadia: Empowering Queer Men's Spirituality." Out patron deity for the first event is the Greek God Pan.

There are currently no major camping gatherings for Queer Pagan men on the East Coast. The closest gathering is Between the Worlds in Ohio, and there are many more such events on the West Coast.

The name "Arcadia" was chosen because it is the name of the historic and mythical Greek region that was home to bisexual and pansexual Greek gods such as Pan, Hermes, and Zeus. During the European Renaissance, homosexual writers and scholars idealized Arcadia as a homosexual Eden and as a utopia for male-male love. To these men, Arcadia was a metaphor for what homosexual life could be without the stigma and constraints of mainstream heterosexual society. They pictured Arcadia as a hidden and isolated leafy grove, a remote pastoral land, or even as an island far from the hustle and bustle and every day cares of the mundane world.

"Those who dwell in Arcadia seek out that secret Eden because of its isolation from the troubled world and its safety from the arrogant demands of those who would deny freedom, curtail human action, and destroy innocence and love." - Byrne R.S. Fone

The Arcadia gathering will be open to Queer men of Pagan, Hellenist, and other Earth-based spiritualities. All respectful seekers over the age of 18 who feel they would gain something from attending are welcome including trans folks, women, and our straight and non-Pagan friends - though all should be aware that most of our workshops, rituals, and activities will be primarily aimed toward Queer Pagan Men.

Because this is a first-time event and because our planning committee is small, we are asking folks attending the event to help us co-create the space and to help us spread the word. We are specifically looking for folks to help with planning and running the event. We are looking for workshop, ritual, and activity presenters. We want this event to succeed, not because it is the idea of any one person or group, but because the Queer Pagan community sees it as something valuable and because individuals within the community are willing to step up and do their part to make it a success.

FMI: www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/index.php/events/arcadia



Youths and a Young Satyr by Hans Thoma, 1890 (Public Domain)

Arcadia: A Gathering for Queer Pagan Men

Theme: Discovering Arcadia: Empowering Queer Men's Spirituality

Patron Deity: The Greek God Pan

October 9-12, 2019

Cumberland, Virginia

www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/index.php/events/arcadia

Finding Home

by Mel Mystery.

"Home" can mean more than one thing. Home might be where you grew up. It might be the place you go once you get off work. Home might be a house, an apartment, a condo, a trailer, or some other dwelling. Home doesn't even have to be a dwelling. It can be a time or a place or a people. Some folks find home in annual events and gatherings like Between the Worlds, Pagan Spirit Gathering, Witch Camp, Gay Pride, and other such events. Some folks find home in groups and communities—the LGBTQ community, the Pagan community, the Poly community, and various Fet communities. Groups, communities, and events are especially important to those who are marginalized and for those folks who aren't on good terms with their birth families. For many, finding home means finding your family of choice. The most important part of home and family is a feeling of belonging, and a feeling that those there have your back. Home is where the heart is. To quote Robert Frost, "Home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in."

For me, home is the place I grew up and that was in my family for over three decades. It's the house near the lake where I ran through the woods in my youth, and where I first camped just inside the woods at my first adolescent signs of growing independence. Home is where I learned to drive up and down the dirt road driveway, where I played in the creeks catching crawfish and newts, and where I fished in the lake with my best friend, Mark, and my neighbor, Shane. Home is where I first learned to work on cars with my Dad as I became enthused with the TV show Knight Rider. It's where I ran around pretending to be Doctor Who while wearing a long scarf. And it's where I pretended to be a Jedi from Star Wars using a tree branch as a lightsaber. Home is where I learned to love animals. We had dogs and cats and hamsters and parakeets and ducks and so many more pets. Home is where my family lived for over 30 years. Home is the place my Dad always said would pass down to me and my sister. Home is the place I knew I could always go back to—no matter what — until it wasn't. Family were the people I knew I could always count on to have my back— no matter what — until they weren't. My Dad passed away in 2009 and my Mom remarried two years later. A few years after she remarried, she sold our home despite protests from me and my sister, and even after requests to buy at least the lot adjacent to home, if not the home itself, because that's all me and my sister would have been able to afford at the time.

I have other "homes"—the place I live now, my local Pagan and LGBTQ communities, and I even felt like I found home at some gatherings I've gone to like the now ended Coph Nia gathering for Gay and Bi Pagan men. None of these make up for the feeling of loss at losing my childhood home. I'm determined to get it back someday—hopefully someday soon. I'd like to retire there and I'd also like to ensure it gets passed down to my sister's kids, as I know my Dad would have liked. In the meantime, I'm hoping to create new homes for myself and for others. I'm still hoping to found my campground though that might take a few more years and my quest to regain my childhood home might have to take precedence. I'm also trying to create "homes" for the "alternative" communities to which I belong. These homes include my local annual "Alternative Pride Picnic" for LGBTQ folks, Pagans, Poly folks, and others. It includes the Brotherhood by the Bog Retreat for Pagan men. Soon it will also include the Arcadia Gathering for Queer Pagan and Hellenist Men.

To quote Matt Smith as the 11th Doctor, "My journey is the same as yours, the same as anyone's. It's taken me so many years, so many lifetimes, but at last I know where I'm going, where I've always been going. Home—the long way 'round."

You can find out more about Mel including his podcast and blog at: www.melmystery.com



Visit our Website

www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/

We have:

- An overview of the proposed campground
- Progress reports on the campground
- Investment opportunities
- Calendar of retreats and events
- Virginia LGBTQ and Pagan Resource Directories

Contact Us

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