
The Magic of French Meadows

French Meadows 2008

Carl Ferré
Photos by Gerard Lum

French Meadows is a magical place. Some people think the magic comes from the warmth and energy of organic food cooked over wood-burning fire pits. Others think it's the change in blood quality from being at 5,400 feet and from being away from electricity for 9-10 days. Still others believe it's the 100-150 like-minded folks per day who attend the annual gathering and create a family felling. I'm convinced it's all of these things and more.

The campground is unique—it has a stream (running water) that flows around three sides of it, large rock formations that provide variety in the landscape and positive energy, and tall pine trees for shade and a welcoming feel. Yet, there is more.

The water, rocks, trees, and air hold the vibrations of all those who have come to this place—from the native American tribes that spent their summers in this bend of the stream to Mr. Gates after whom the campground is named to Herman and Cornellia Aihara and all the other teachers and campers who have ever attended.

All these things and much more make French Meadows a most special place. So, each year we arrive with a 26-foot truck full of food, kitchen-



SHIRLEY RESTS WHILE ENJOYING THE SCENIC VIEW

ware, and all things needed to host the 9-day event. Each year presents challenges, but as these are overcome the camp gets stronger and individuals are able to tap into the camp's magical healing energy.

Consider this quote from Mike Chen: "Maria and I were quite impressed by the youngsters' involvement—both physical and intellectual—with the camp. After several generations of macrobiotic involvement

in North America, the question can easily be, 'I wonder why my folks, parents, and aunts and uncles—those guys—got involved with such a philosophy/diet/way of life—camping at 5400 feet?'" To me, part of it is the magic of French Meadows.

Plan to join us next summer (July 10-19, 2009) for the 40th consecutive camp at French Meadows and the 50th consecutive Ohsawa-style camp held in the United States.



ELIZABETH AND JULIA ROLLING SUSHI



GRACIE AND KELSEY PERFECT THE TREE POSE



MEREDITH TEACHES IN THE MORNING LECTURE

MORNING

Each morning at French Meadows begins with the enthusiastic melodious wake-up call of Mike Chen and the camp chorus. Some go to meditation overlooking the peaceful mountain stream, some go to the kitchen to help prepare the delicious meals, some go to the do-in, yoga, or qigong exercise classes, and some sleep in of course. Chanting and the insightful morning lecture of the day are sandwiched between the always delicious breakfast and lunch.

AFTERNOON

The afternoon begins with free time for swimming, hiking, relaxing, or shopping in the bookstore. This is followed by the afternoon lectures, cooking class, mid-afternoon snack, shiatsu class and dinner preparations. The active kids program runs both mornings and afternoons during the lecture times. And, those who choose the optional waterfall hike return in time for dinner excellently prepared by Packy Conway, Susanne Jensen, and staff.



BOB TEACHES SHIATSU AMONG THE PINES



TOM BUILDS THE BRIDGE TO SOMEWHERE



MELANIE TEACHES "NAUGHTY RICE"



The Seasoned (Ronald) and the Up-and-Coming (AJ)



Carl, Bob, Laura, Bob, Melanie, Sam, Kasey, and Marie Enjoy Lunch



Gus, John, and Ivan Juggling at the Variety Show

EVENING

Highlights of the evening events include the nightly campfires, Sue Hunter's great packing lot dance, legendary co-ed volleyball games, and two of the best variety shows ever produced one hosted by Neil Malley and the other by Ronald Koetzsch.

Complete photo galleries for many years can be found at www.gomf.macrobiotic.net/campalong with a link to additional photos at Matthias Grabiak's website. Dates for next year's gathering are July 10-19, 2009.

Our Sincere Thanks to:

Eden Foods

for their donation of many quality food products

Lundberg Family Farms

for their donation of all the organic rice used at camp

Pacific Bakery Yeast-Free

for the donation of super-fine all-natural breads

All Teachers, Staff, and Volunteers

for all the help and support