

HARVEST GATHERING – THE FLAVOR
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By Michael Erlewine (Michael@Erlewine.net)

Taken at On the Bernard Farm near Lake City, Michigan

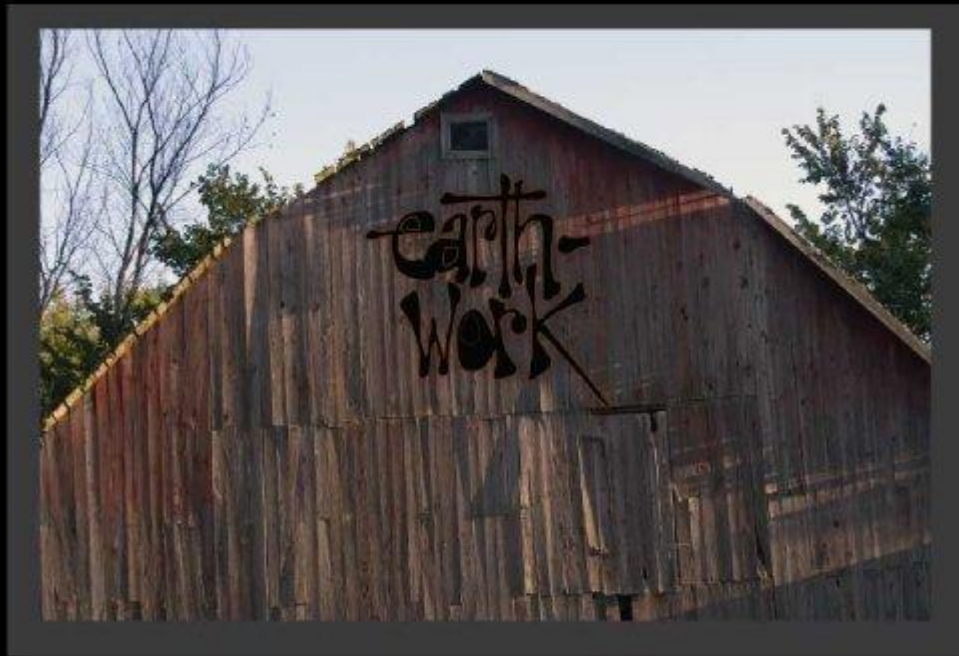
I am a child of the 1960s, was there before they began, totally during, and so far I am still here. The '60s were a special time for me and for a lot of people who lived them. I am frequently asked what they were like and of course it is hard to describe that time to someone who was not there, which brings me to the Harvest Gathering celebration. They don't call it a music festival.

When I went to my first Harvest Gathering, I thought I was just going to another music festival (there is that phrase again), since two of my daughters perform regularly, one of them (May Erlewine) full-time. And since it was already autumn, I had been to more festivals than I probably wanted to that year. To my amazement, the Harvest Gathering was the closest thing to being back in the 1960s that I had had experienced since that time: three days of music and being together in an almost family-like atmosphere. Three days and nights (for the music is almost non-stop) and the best food I could have imagined and the company of hundreds and hundreds of musicians.

The Harvest Gathering is all about musicians, and that is why it is not advertised, a place for musicians to play with and for other musicians – a gathering of music players. Since there is little to no advertising, the Harvest Gathering is almost like a private party. Perhaps a couple thousand other people (non-musicians) find their way there by word of mouth. It is an incredible and wonderful experience for me.

Today we are heading for the 10th annual Harvest Gathering on the third weekend in September 2010, and there is enough infrastructure now in place to accommodate a few more folks, so thus my writing about this event. Last year there were 65 bands, and in 2008 there were 85 bands, which means a lot of musicians in one place. At by this time there are three stages going on all the time, not to mention lectures and workshops as well. There are tents for kids activities, a vast camping area, strings of lights at night, and so forth. I could go on and on, but I thought it might be better to tell you a little more about the Earthwork Harvest Gathering through some photos I have taken there. Check them out.

2010: The 10th Annual Harvest Gathering



The best-kept secret in the Midwest music scene is going into its 10th year and we don't call it a 'festival,' although it features more bands than any festival we know of. It is called the "Harvest Gathering." Here are some photos to bring you up to date.

Photo by
Michael Erlwine

Harvest Gathering Event Photos



'HarvestGathering' on Facebook



All Ages Play Harvest Gathering

Photo by
Michael Erlwine

EarthworkMusic.com

The Earthwork family of folks is music oriented, everything from folk music to classical and jazz. And there are special events where kids learn to play music and perform for each other and for adults. Everywhere at the gathering are small groups of people playing music and sharing it with each other.



All Ages Attend Harvest Gathering

Photo by
Michael Erlwine

EarthworkMusic.com

If you don't like kids, this would not be the place to hang out, for the emphasis is definitely on bringing the whole family. In fact, the gathering is a perfect mix of young, adult, and older folks. Everyone is welcome. There is a whole tent just for kids to do art projects, other areas introducing children to music, and of course storytelling. Kids are where the future is at and Earthworkers know that.



At Night in the Barn Harvest Gathering

Photo by
Michael Erlwine

The Barn is one of three stages where music is going on from mid-morning until early in the morning. The audience is comfortable sitting on stacked rows of hay bales and there is a dance floor down front which gets used.



At night the various stages are illuminated and there are long walks with lights hanging from poles making the place almost mystical. Here is one of the entrances to the barn between sets. All the events are staggered so that, if you want to, you could catch part of acts on all three stages.

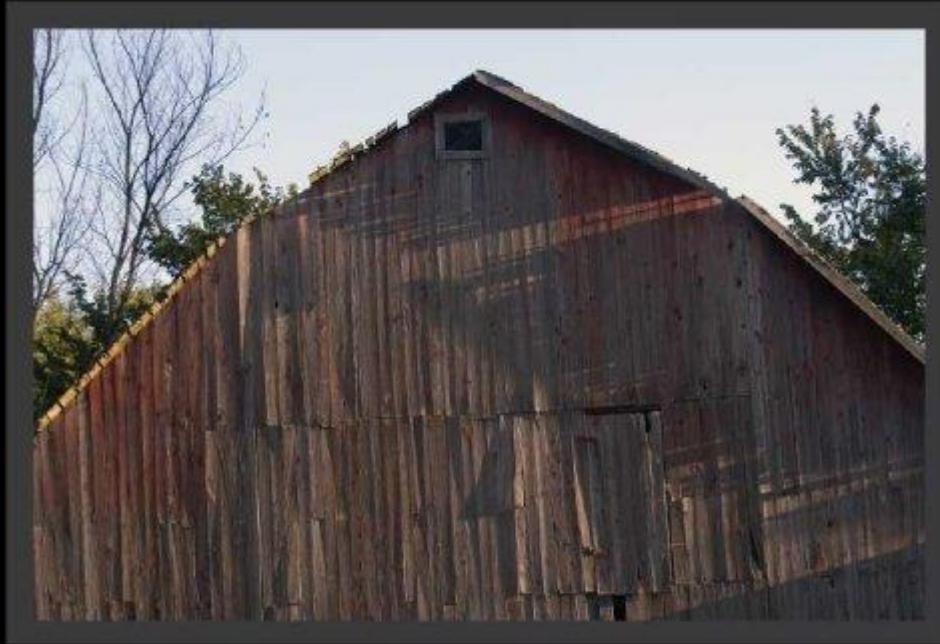


The Barn is One of Three Stages Harvest Gathering

Photo by
Michael Erlwine

EarthworkMusic.com

Kids, parents, older folks, everyone grabs a seat and kicks back to listen. Here is a morning shot when the Barn Stage is just getting up and running.



The Barn Stage Harvest Gathering

Photo by
Michael Erlwine

EarthworkMusic.com

One of the stages is in a large barn, labeled appropriately enough the Barn Stage. We are looking at the back wall where (on the inside) the stage is located.



Yearly Basketball Tournament Harvest Gathering

Photo by
Michael Erlwine

EarthWorkMusic.com

There is a hot basketball tournament that has been going on for years and the right to keep this trophy for the next year is fiercely contested. Each team has both men and women. The winning team of Micah, Andrea, and Patrick triumphed over all odds and emerged victorious.



Be-U-tiful Music
Harvest Gathering

Photo by
Michael Erlwine

EarthworkMusic.com

No matter what type of music you like, you are bound to find some of your favorite kind. Not just folk music, but bluegrass, singer/songwriter, blues, world music, fusion, and even jazz is present.



Most Folks Camp Out Harvest Gathering

Photo by
Michael Erlwine

EarthWorkMusic.com

Although the motels around Lake City, Michigan are probably all booked up, the majority of folks simply camp out, bringing everything from a pup-tent to bus-rigs like the one shown here. With 180 acres of land, there is plenty of room.



Solar Panel Camping Harvest Gathering

Photo by
Michael Erlwine

EarthWorkMusic.com

This bus even has a wood burning stove in it and solar panels for electricity. One of the owners makes pancakes for the lucky few friends who pass by and are invited in.



Coffee and Pastry Harvest Gathering

Photo by
Michael Erlwine

EarthworkMusic.com

There are several concessions available. This one has various juices, drinks, organic cookies, and not-so organic cookies in abundance. Although most of the food is vegetarian, there is another booth where all-organic beef burgers are sold and the line is frequently long.

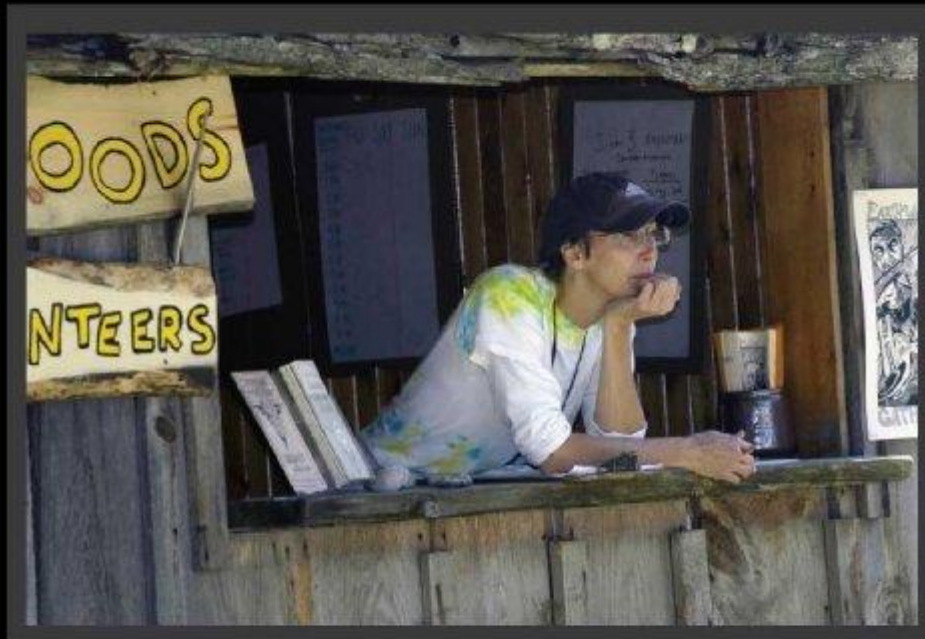


Day and Night Music Harvest Gathering

Photo by
Michael Erlwine

EarthworkMusic.com

Literally every room, tent, and cubbyhole has some kind of music taking place, especially in the evenings when it can get a little chilly.



Information Booth Harvest Gathering Family

Photo by
Michael Erlwine

EarthworkMusic.com

Here is the information booth and part of the merch tent, where you can buy CDs and DVDs of the various performers.



The Kids Art Tent Harvest Gathering

Photo by
Michael Erlwine

Younger kids are busy here all day with supervised instruction and just plain having fun.



Local Produce Harvest Gathering Family

Photo by
Michael Erlwine

EarthworkMusic.com

The very best chefs from Traverse City come down to the farm to pitch in and cook. There are truckloads of food rolling in and mountains of potatoes to peel. Every effort is made to use only locally-grown fruits and vegetables.



Mama Luna Harvest Gathering Family

Photo by
Michael Erlwine

mamalunaarts.com

Not only music, but also interpretive dance is often part of the show. Here is "Mama Luna" doing what she does so well.



Here is the merchandise booth at night, a place to get information and to buy music and T-shirts.



Music Workshops
Harvest Gathering

Photo by
Michael Erlwine

EarthworkMusic.com

The image shows two women seated and playing cellos. They are positioned on either side of a vertical glass partition. The woman on the left is wearing a white knit hat and a white sweater, while the woman on the right is wearing a red jacket and glasses. The background consists of dark wooden walls and a ceiling with a painted sky scene. The entire scene is framed by a dark border.

Here a cello lesson is taking place, which is also a bit of a performance. Other interested players look on.



The Night is Always Young Harvest Gathering

Photo by
Michael Erlwine

EarthworkMusic.com

One of the vendors that is quite popular offers teas and espresso treats from early morning when the mist is still rising until late at night.



On the Cedar Stage Earthwork Family

Photo by
Michael Erlwine

EarthWorkMusic.com

Here is a shot of some Earthworkers on the Cedar Stage performing together at the close of Seth & May's set.



Organic Food All Day Harvest Gathering

Photo by
Michael Erlwine

EarthworkMusic.com

The food is worth coming to the gathering for just in itself. Rather than set mealtimes, food continually rolls out from the kitchen all day long. Here is a bit of breakfast being fried up.



Breakfast starts early at the gathering. Here a special kind of thick pancake is in the works, while folks like myself are standing close by and waiting for them.



Signage Harvest Gathering Family

Photo by
Michael Erlwine

EarthworkMusic.com

The days leading up to the start of the Harvest Gathering are busy ones, with all kinds of paths being laid out, signs being painted and put up, and what-have-you?



The bonfires go all night, with music eventually giving way to quiet conversation and sometimes just staying warm.



Standing Room Only Harvest Gathering

Photo by
Michael Erlwine

The Barn Stage is frequently packed, with standing room only. Here, even the dance floor is filled with folks wanting to hear a performer.



The Waltz Hour Harvest Gathering

Photo by
Michael Erlwine

EarthWorkMusic.com

Very popular is the Waltz Hour, when perhaps 20 musicians on stage play some ethereal waltzes, and the dance floor is filled with happy couples taking advantage of the event.



Washing Potatoes Harvest Gathering Family

Photo by
Michael Erlwine

EarthworkMusic.com

Everyone pitches in, adults and kids. Here a child learns the fine art of washing a potato, while good conversation fills the air.



Lots of Food until 2 A.M.
Harvest Gathering

Photo by
Michael Erlwine

EarthworkMusic.com

Food is one thing there is plenty of, and they have a walk-in cooler just to keep it cold. Here some watermelons get ready for their main event.