

OUT ON THE FARM: FAMILY WEEKEND

June 15, 2012

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As we wind down this lunar cycle, these three days before the New Moon (which is next Tuesday) are traditionally quiet ones, the "dark of the Moon" as it is called. Well, this time I for one am not going to just sit and wait for New Moon. I am taking off for the day, maybe more. I have someone to house sit my dog Molly, although he is none too thrilled about my leaving. I did stuff his rubber Kong with dog biscuits and peanut butter, so that will at least keep him busy for a while.

I was all packed and on the road by 6 AM Thursday and out in the fields taking photos by a little after 7 AM on a farm up near Lake City, Michigan. This is where my daughter May and her husband Seth Bernard live, in a little octagonal house on a hill. It was still early when I rolled in and I was soon taking photos of a mass of bees warming themselves by the door of their hive, and later of honeybees deep inside some poppies. I can't show you those photos because I forgot to bring my Compact-Flash reader to read the photos out of the camera, but it should be here today. This photo is from last year of a couple of hover bees who obviously stayed out all night because they caught the morning dew. Photography is not all I am here for. I am also here to help out at the Family Weekend.

<http://familyweekend.us/>

Each year my daughter May, her husband Seth, Bob Bernard, Susannah Schwager, and a troop of volunteers have a three day gathering of kids and parents for a weekend on the Bernard farm. They have a working sawmill, hives and a honey house, a maple syrup shack, and so on. Everyone camps out, shares meals, and it is all about kids and the family. There is song writing, performing, recording, dance, theater, games, and lots of sharing circles where everyone gets together. There are nature walks, talent shows, primitive and practical skills, etc. It is a special time. This year there are perhaps 150 people gathering.

My daughter Anne is bringing my latest granddaughter Emma May, so one of my jobs was to clean out the camper where Anne will be changing diapers and what-not. I must have vacuumed up thousands of mouse turds, dead insects, and just dirt that somehow accumulated since last season. It was clean, clean, clean, and then wiping down surfaces, washing blankets, and you get the idea. I did that.

I got to ride on the tractor with Bob Bernard down into the midst of a herd of Scottish highland cattle. I hope to show you some photos tomorrow from the herd.

Right now I am kind of just resting and hanging out, waiting for dinner for us volunteers and probably going to bed early. Out here on the farm, far from the city the night sky is dark. You can see the summer Milky Way, a wide band of stars that divides the sky in two.

I will do astrology readings for some of the families, since showing how relationships work is my astrological specialty. I also may take some family portraits. Right now it is very early Friday morning and the first rosy fingers of dawn are just appearing. I will soon be out with my camera in the fields. Hope all my friends are well.

AT THE GATHERING

June 16, 2012

I stayed up kind of late sitting on the porch talking with people, so I slept in till around 5 AM as opposed to my regular get-up-time or around 2-3 AM, but here I am at last and a little groggy at that.

Yesterday was in the 90s here, I believe, so later afternoon was a windless hot. Lot of people here now, and kids of all ages. All kinds of babies walking around with their moms. And kids, everywhere, often in little packs obviously on a mission. And grownups, and even a sprinkling of elders, just enough that I don't feel too out of place. After all, as far as I am concerned I will forever be 25 years old inside, so there.

Mostly I did astrology readings for folks. That seems to be what is most interesting about me. So one after another I did twenty minutes to an hour readings, sitting out on a blanket in the shade with my laptop. It was fun and it looks to be even more readings today, since the word gets around. I might have to start with appointments....

Food is good here, all natural and whole. My granddaughter Emma May, about five months old, really makes eye contact with me now and smiles each time. I like that. Her eyes are crystal blue and big. Of course to me she is a sheer beauty. I will try to get a photo today.

And this is hug city folks, so don't try to get up and cross any space with people in it because you are going to get hugged. I am an apprentice hugger, have been for years, but I kind of like it.

LAST DAY ON THE FARM

June 17, 2012

It's early Sunday morning here on the Earthwork farm. The eerie cries of the peacocks, like someone calling for help, let me know its morning. Yesterday was very hot and also filled with constant activities, so it is somewhat of a blur.

The word that I was doing astrology readings got around so I was busy almost all day in my little office. My office was a bedspread on the ground in the shade, a folded blanket for a cushion, and a plastic tub for a table where I set my laptop. There I sat with people, one after another, each reading taking from twenty minutes to an hour or more.

Meanwhile, around the farm in small groups were all kinds of workshops for kids and their parents. Let's see, there were drumming workshops. You know I could hear those. And there were workshops for dance, and even a clowning workshop. Or you could learn about medicinal and edible plants, take a guided nature walk, and learn primitive skills. There was a girls & woman circle, one on recycle craft, fiddling, and certainly songwriting. There were also ones on making bead mandalas, clay work, theater, and even a parent's circle.

In the early evening there was the annual Family Weekend Talent Show which lasted over two and a half hours. There was every kind of talent imaginable, some of the most fun were tiny kids

singing or dancing and so on. Many got stage fright and did nothing but freak out, at which time they were given a round of applause for a “good pass.” Most of them ended up smiling through their tears.

After that I could see folks gearing up for some drinks and conversation heading into the night, but I was already way tired, so I snuck away to bed, and here I am up for the last day. Today we will have a father’s day circle, and I do have three of my children here. I will do readings again, although there are more requests than I have time for.

I am already packing up my things and thinking of my little dog waiting for me back home. My daughter and granddaughter Emma will be coming to our house for a few days, so that will be fun. My favorite dumb joke is to say to whomever is around, “I didn’t know there would be kids here.” LOL.

Well there you have it, my life out on the Earthwork farm. If the good god is willing and the creek don’t rise, I should be back home tomorrow.

DREAMY SUNDAY MORNING

June 18, 2012



Here is a view of the barn stage early Sunday morning. It was empty. Now, if this was the Harvest Gathering (3rd week in September each year), where there are some eighty or more bands playing for three days on three stages, there would be nighttime revelers scattered asleep in the hayloft in varying degrees of disarray.

But this very early morning it was serene. Someone had left these little strings of light on all night, although the larger stage lights were off. The wind was too high to take nature pictures outside and it had been raining in the night, which flooded many tents. There was still a light, almost misty, rain, which was kind of nice after some 90-degree days and too much dust.

Everyone was a little quiet as more people than usual (wet tents?) drifted in toward the kitchen for their morning coffee fix, folks standing around in coats and hats, either just in the rain or under one of the tents. It was slow and nice.

Later, after the breakfast lines thinned out, we met in the barn for a Father's Day circle. All of the fathers spoke, and the grandfather's went first. There were only two of us granddads, and I guess I am the oldest. Was I the oldest person there? Could be. Scary.

After there was a massive bunch of games with kids playing on and under a huge parachute. I kind of drifted about for a while and settled watching my son, Michael Andrew (who is six foot two), playing mandolin with Samantha, a violin player, while Michael's partner Micah sang. It was really nice. They were playing music just outside the kitchen, so the food crew could hear it.

Micah sang while holding my new granddaughter Emma in a sling, while Emma's mom (my daughter Anne) packed up her tent. It was somewhere around then that I knew I was done and it was time for me to head back to Big Rapids. I had some lunch and hit the road, even though several other events were still scheduled. It was time to be home and with my dog. Actually there were two dogs waiting, because Anne had left her Husky Lukah there too. Yes they were happy to see me.

The dogs had been cared for by a dear friend of my daughter May's, Stephanie Kirby, and her kids, and they had done a great job. I had stupidly left two overripe bananas in our kitchen and when I came back there were some fresh bananas and a large load of banana bread waiting for me. How nice is that! Thanks Stephanie.