



Family Summits

E-Mail Newsletter

MAY 21 , 2007

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 15

Family Nature Summits – In the News



I'll see you at the Summit

Jacky Runice

Posted Saturday, April 28, 2007

Proving my kids' theory that I, supreme Poobah of high-tailing it out of town, don't really know everything, Daily Herald reader Lynn Eikenbary of Schaumburg enlightened me to Family Nature Summits: educational, active and affordable nature vacations offering yearly experiences around North America.

Founded by the National Wildlife Federation, or NWF, more than 30 years ago, a Family Nature Summit is a week of learning about and playing in nature for everyone from toddlers to grandparents. Today, Summits are run by a partnership of NWF and a nonprofit organization (Family Summits Inc.) made up of loyal summiteers who so enjoyed the experiences they had to keep them going for the rest of us when NWF could no longer serve as the direct provider.

Summits have taken place in an array of environments from Maine to Alaska and all points in between wherever nature rears its beautiful head.

This year's get-together will be Aug. 4-10 at the Blue Ridge Assembly near Asheville, N.C. One day you might learn about birding, astronomy, orienteering, geology, nature photography or pottery from engaging experts, some of whom are pre-eminent in their respective fields, and the next day sign up for a easy nature walk to see the local flora and fauna or try a challenging all-day hike into remote back country.

While you're learning how to kayak, the kids are entrenched in their own activities. Each Summiteer registers for a program group based upon age: the Adult Program is for ages 26 and up; 19- to 25-year-olds sign up for the Young Adult Program; teens, ages 15 to 18 have their Teen Adventure program; and younger kids are smartly separated into Teen Explorer (ages 13-15); Junior Naturalist Program (ages 5-12); and Preschool Program (ages 3 and 4). There's even child care available for the youngest kids.

Everyone gets back together in the evening for group programs, such as concerts, ice-cream socials, storytelling featuring local folklore, wildlife shows, dances and more.

"The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes."

Marcel Proust

Please forward this message to others who you feel would be interested.

Click here to [subscribe](#) or [unsubscribe](#) to this newsletter

More than a few children attended their first Summit as toddlers and have grown up in the program learning about nature, having great fun and becoming good stewards of the Earth.

Christopher Blank, president of Family Summits Inc., attended his first in 1994 when his boys were 7 and 9 years old. It was held at the historic Mount Washington Hotel in the White Mountains of New Hampshire.

"We missed the '95 and '96 Summits, but attended all of them since then," Blank said. "The boys became the driving force encouraging us to return each year so they could get together with the friends they had met and do the fun things they got to do at each Summit. They often kept in communication with their friends by phone and e-mail throughout the year.

"Two years ago when the Summit was held in St Andrews, New Brunswick, the two of them drove themselves cross-country to and from the Summit. They stayed with many Summit friends and families along the way," said Blank. "They were very instrumental in motivating me to pick up the reins and keep the Summits alive after the NWF decided they no longer wanted to run them after the 2006 Summit."

Although called "family" Summits, the nature conventions welcome singles and couples, too. Eikenbary attended her first Summit in Wisconsin 25 years ago, and as a single person has made and retained countless valued friendships over the years through the yearly meeting.

"From that very first summit I was so impressed by the instructors and their level of expertise," said Eikenbary. "They're so personable - you may be eating and discussing things with an Audubon author at meal time. The evening programs can be a slide show on reintroducing the wolves to a particular area or square dancing where 60-year olds-are dancing with 3-year-olds."

The home for this year's Summit is the YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly, a full-service conference center in the gorgeous Blue Ridge mountains near Asheville, N.C. Accommodations range from hotel-style rooms and suites to economical dormitory-style rooms and cottages that sleep from six to 14 people. Prices vary accordingly. A dorm style room costs \$240 for the six nights, for example, and a cottage sleeping 14 goes for \$1,290 without regard to the number of persons sharing it. The cost of meals ranges from free for kids under age 3 to \$199 for ages 13 and up for the week. Program fees range from \$225 to \$500 for the week (depending upon age) and there's a \$25 discount for first time Summiteers.

For details and registration, go to www.familysummits.org or call (949) 743-2567.

Contact Details

Family Summits
4675 MacArthur Court, Suite 550,
Newport Beach, CA 92660

Click [Here](#) for a Flash Slide Show about Family Nature Summit

Phone & Fax (949) 743-2567
Website www.familysummits.org
Email info@familysummits.org