

Southwest Washington Sams Funfest

The Early Days

Funfest actually began at Beach Cleanup in 1997. Several S.W. Washington chapters were at Long Beach taking part. After cleanup Orville Helm, Ed Bredo, Sunny Church and Jeanne Hartshorn were sitting around the campfire after potluck discussing how much fun this group campout was. Orville remarked that we should have more campouts together.

Sonny who was the Southwest area Assistant Director and was well liked for working hard for his chapters, died suddenly not too long after Samboree. Orville Helm and his chapter, Napawina (short for Napavine-Winlock) worked hard putting together a Memorial Group Campout in Sonny's honor at Swiss Hall near PeEll and Raymond. Fifty-three rigs signed up to come making it possible to have Swiss Hall with no big fee. Only forty three rigs showed up to honor their commitment. This left Napawina with a treasury breaking deficit that nearly killed the event happening again. Jeanne Hartshorn figured out how much was needed to cover the deficit and Steve Hartshorn asked for donations and we passed the hat. All forty three rigs donated a set share and the day was saved.

Napawina had worked hard and had a community Hobo stew. They furnished a big pot and a large amount of meat. Everyone else put something in the pot. It was delicious and we all ate it for three days. They planned really fun games. We shot slingshots, milled a sawhorse cow with a rubber glove bag and apple juice milk, roped a sawhorse steer from the back of a sawhorse horse and more. There was a horseshoe pitching tournament and everyone had an awesome time.

Napawina set such a high standard word of mouth spread and the second year 105 rigs signed up and paid which was 5 more rigs than Swiss Hall had campsites to accommodate. We all squeezed in. The second year Estelle Lee and Jerry Crockett of Lo-Ke-Co Camper Sams took the reins and put on the Second Memorial Campout. They did everything by themselves.

There were new games to compete in and another Hobo Stew. There was lots of visiting around the fire burning in the round fireplace in the middle of the Fireside room and along the tables in that big room. The tables were massive, made of old bowling alley. With 105 rigs there were lots of people who did not know each other. Everything went off without a hitch except for the usual May deluge wiping out the horseshoe tournament which had gone so well for Napawina the first year.

Steve and Jeanne Hartshorn, members of Hanging Loose Sams hauled out a game they collected at Maryland Samboree in 1987, that could be played inside the hall. People out west had not seen it before and it was difficult to get 18 people for the new game, Beanbag Baseball. People had so much fun with it we had to set up again for those who had not played the first time. There was no trouble filling the chairs for the second game.

At the end of the second campout no one was willing to shoulder the huge load of work to put on another event. Everyone had again had so much fun everyone was disappointed. Finally LeRoy Sloop of Hanging Loose Sams said he might. First he wanted to talk to his chapter about helping. He gathered six chapter couples in a fifth wheel and told them he wanted every attending chapter to sign up to do a part in putting on the event. He would coordinate putting it on. We agreed. Steve and Jeanne Hartshorn went to their rig and wrote down jobs like registration, parking, games, music and sound system, potluck, cleanup and all the jobs still in use today. That evening LeRoy told the crowd he would coordinate if every chapter signed up for a job they could handle. In about half an hour the signup sheet was full and the third group campout was on its way. One problem discussed was camping capacity. LeRoy decided to limit attendance to South West Chapters and those who had attended before. That worked but we had 110 the third year.

LeRoy gathered his chapter again and gave each couple a job. Their job was to keep in contact with one of the chapters doing the jobs and make sure they were being handled as needed during the year. The first newsletter for the

third year went out in late May of 2000. LeRoy told Jeanne Hartshorn what he wanted to say and she wrote it up. Steve Hartshorn printed it. Snail mail was still being used.

As the second campout ended Jeanne looked around at all the different people and chapters and thought of a mixer game and LeRoy liked the idea. She came up with an interview, autograph game. Twenty two signatures of people not in your chapter were needed. Things like who was a teacher, who had caught a really big fish, who had 8 grandkids and more questions. Filled sheets went into a drawing. Hartshorns donated \$20 as prize. People had fun and got to know each other. It fostered a good close feeling at the event. Mixers of some kind are still a popular activity.

LeRoy decided if the event were to go on another year it needed a name as it was being called different things. He gathered several suggestions from different chapters. Jeanne wrote a letter with all the suggestions and sent self-addressed stamped postcards to all the participating chapters. When the returns were counted the name chosen was South West Washington Sam's Funfest. The second place name with 5 fewer votes was simply Rainfest because the second year was a very soggy one.

LeRoy set a pattern that lasted several years until some improvements were added. Now, everyone puts on Funfest. Unfortunately, that Summer LeRoy, suffered a heart attack on top of his fifth wheel and died, readying for a chapter campout. He had not had a chance to do his accounting although he had passed leftover money to the 2001 coordinators Paul and Elaine Dunbar of Blue Pacific Sams. LeRoy had charged a small rally fee on top of the camping fees paid to Swiss Hall so there was a small amount of money to pass on. If no 2001 coordinator was found it had been decided to refund that to participants but of course that was not necessary. Some people, not understanding why no accounting was sent out were very upset so in following years coordinators were careful to send out accounting as soon as bills were settled. As another result it was decided by participant's vote about that time, if Funfest should fold

any leftover money would be divided equally between Dogs for the Deaf and Ronald McDonald House.

Sometime in the first three or four years bridge Hopping Sams were enjoying Funfest. They had \$100 left over from a similar event which had folded and they voted to donate it to Funfest which gave Funfest more working capital.

Funfest. It is fun. The first year Napawina set high standards for fun and simple, competitive, action games. Over the years we have cast fish poles, played Hill Billy Golf, had golf holes all around the hall using croquette mallets and balls, shot miniature basketball, played Skittles, had horse races of all kinds, had poker runs and many more. There is always a man and a woman winner of competitive games.

In addition to the Competitive games we have had Hartshorn's Geezer Baseball Tournaments which they handled through 2013, now taken over by another chapter. At Funfest we have evolved to even more good events. Each year is somewhat different but we have potlucks, breakfasts and sometimes a chapter puts on a supper. We have book and puzzle exchanges, pinochle, and cribbage tournaments, mixer, door prizes, card bingo, and often written games. For years we had wonderful music put on mostly by Blue Pacific Sams.

Over the years we have had many themes. In the very beginning Napawina, LoKeCo, Blue Pacific, and Hanging Loose shouldered lots of the event. Since then every chapter has cheerfully pitched in and done its share and helped others when needed. Now days what Blue Pacific and Napawina started has carried over.

They started baskets, fundraisers and raffles without which Funfest would not have money for food and events. Funfest has always had a good, fun spirit.

REMEMBER...FUNFEST IS NOT PUT ON BY "THEM" IT IS PUT ON BY "US"

- 1998—*Napawina Sams*...Orville Helm...Great Games, Hobo Stew, Fun
- 1999—LoKeCo Camper Sams...Estelle Lee & Gary Crockett...Music, Hobo Stew
- 2000—*Hanging Loose Sams*...LeRoy Sloop...Job sign up, newsletters, mixer game
- 2001—*Blue Pacific Sams*...Paul & Elaine Dunbar...themes, breakfast
- 2002—LoKeCo Camper Sams...Jan Davidso ...3 food table potluck
- 2003—*Cowlitz County Sams*...Martha McLure..min organization. Other chapters stepped in
- 2004—*Twin City Rovers*...Ann Groth..good organization and planning
- 2005—*Blue Pacific Sams*...Paul and Elaine Dunbar...Bad deluge, rigs got stuck
- 2006—South Sound Sams...Evie Zobrist...Moved event to Land Yacht Harbor
- 2007—Tramper Sams...Gary Bigger..Good at passing organization to next co-ord.
- 2008—Fort Vancouver Sams...Ken Doon & Ed Otton..more raffles
- 2009—*Napawina Sams*...Necia Cruz & Orville Helm...First Glider Raffle
- 2010—Daffodil Ramblers...Roy and Fay Stonebrenner...great prizes
- 2011—Tramper Sams...Gary Bigger...Saved Funfest, no co-ord. volunteer, 97 rigs
- 2012—LoKeCo...Shelley Russell...organized passing co-ord. info more e-mail, 70 rigs
- 2013—Sneaker Sams...Kathy Laird...good organization, 67 rigs
- 2014—Daffodil Ramblers...Royce Poynter...73 rigs
- 2015—Sneakers...Bob Troyer...dancing, good raffle success, 68 rigs
- 2016—Fort Vancouver Sams...Ivan Crosby..skits, silent auction, 66 rigs
- 2017—LoKeCo...Shelley Russell...fun and successful event, 56 rigs. issues with Land Yacht Harbor, no co-ord. stepping up

Future Funfests:

- 2018—Sneakers...Bob Troyer steps up...Funfest moves to Swiss Sportsman Club for a fantastic event. 😊
- 2019—Your Chapter...You will do a great job as coordinator