

**Spring Gathering of the Radical Faeries, to be held at Autumn Farm, Takaka on Labour Weekend, Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> to Monday 26<sup>th</sup> of October 2020.**

The Queen Registrars Howl and Ribbonwood of the 2020 Spring Gathering of the Radical Faeries welcome and invite all gay men to join us for Beltane, the ancient Gaelic festival marking the start of summer and a celebration of potential and growth. The Call (theme) for this year's Spring Gathering is '*Faerie Stories*' and those who gather are invited to share their own personal stories, while exploring the history of the Radical Faeries, to tell tales of what it is to be gay in New Zealand and the wider world, and to imagine what it will mean to be gay men in the future.

---

**THE CALL – '*Faerie Stories*'**

*It is August 31<sup>st</sup>, 1979. The scorching summer sun of the Arizona desert sets on 220 gay men who excitedly huddle, meeting for the first time. They stare at each other, eyes wide with wonder, as if they are seeing for the first time. Each of these men have answered a Call, an invitation urging them to come:*

*To share new insights about ourselves;*

*To dance in the moonlight;*

*To renew our oaths against patriarchy/corporations/racism*

*To hold, protect, nurture and caress one another;*

*To talk about the politics of gay espirtment/the enspirtment of gay politics;*

*To find the healing place inside our hearts;*

*To become Inspirer/Listener as we share new breakthroughs in how we perceive gay consciousness;*

*To soar like an eagle;*

*To re-discover and re-invent our myths;*

*To talk about gay living and loving alternatives;*

*To experience the groundedness of the calamus root;*

*To share our gay visions;*

*To sing, sing, sing;*

**TO EVOKE A GREAT FAERIE CIRCLE**

*Now, as the moon rises, that word ...Faerie... lingers on the lips of those men. It starts as a whisper, a word once loaded with hate, and slowly swells to a promise, then a prayer, and as the light of the waxing moon shines forth the word is reclaimed! The world is born anew in a crescendo of drums, laughter, invocations, and the peel of silver bells. As the moon passes her zenith the music ebbs but the euphoria remains, accompanied by a soft melody of giggling, intimate whispers, and the moans of lovemaking. As first dawn breaks on this new planet of faerie-vision, each of these men throw off the ugly green frogskin of hetero-imitation and meet the new day as the shining Faerie Prince that was hidden beneath.*

The 220 men who shared that night under the stars at the first Radical Faerie Gathering came together seeking something more than the emptiness that modern society offered. It was a world where gay men were caught between the hollowness of assimilating into a masquerade of hetero-imitation, punctuated by the pursuit of material goods and a veneer of respectability and monogamy, where even the best efforts were met with little encouragement, much resistance and even active hostility from their heterosexual neighbours. The alternative was the brutal competition of the 'gay scene' where men treated each other as objects to be manipulated, mastered, controlled and consumed. To these 220 men, answering the first Call was a rejection of both of these paths, and as they gathered in the Arizona desert, they imagined a world of their own and began to create a place to call home.

40 years later, despite tremendous advances in civil rights, gay men once again face a world of dwindling compassion, kindness and understanding, and a diminished sense of identity and genuine community. We journey into an uncertain future marked by social, environmental and even existential challenges. Therefore, as the world seems darker, we light the Beltane fires and seek to make the world anew and the Call booms and echoes once more, and must begin with the cry:

**He aha te mea nui o te ao. He tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata!**

**What is the most important thing in the world? It is people, it is people, it is people!**

*To all gay men, come and be welcomed!  
Let us gather in secure and consecrated places,  
To make time genuine and honest connections;  
To find level-headed, fair consensus among our circles;  
To celebrate, rejoice and revel in our existence and uniqueness as gay men;  
To find new ways to cherish one another;  
To accept all, and to outright reject any forms of exclusion and othering;  
To be gay men without guilt or shame;  
To invent new rhyme and reason and ritual;  
To tell our stories and know our history;  
To find and embrace new friends, lovers and partners;  
To fully accept ourselves and others by sharing our realities;  
To challenge, ground and affirm our perspectives of the world through the experience of others;  
To pull each other closer and find strength as we make our journey together.*

This Call entreats and welcomes all gay men who would welcome others with loving hearts and open minds – regardless of race, age, physicality, personal history and challenges, economic status, religious or spiritual beliefs. For all that hear this Call know that you will not be turned away. Gay men, come, gather! Come, find your way home.

#### **WHAT ARE THE RADICAL FAERIES?**

The Radical Faeries are a loose association of (mostly) gay / queer men who gather together to experience and and explore what it is to be “gay-centered” - to create real spaces where gay men are the majority and discover what is important to *us* as we share and interact with each other. Exactly what Radical Faeries do can substantially change from place to place, but they are held together by a core of shared values:

The Radical Faeries believe that gay men play an important role and make a real contribution to our wider communities and society, and that we have an essential purpose in the fabric of what it is to be human.

Radical Faeries have always been grassroots in orientation – there is no Faerie Pope, or strict rules. A faerie gathering happens in the shape or form defined by whomever organises them and puts out the “Call.” Answering a Call is a matter of personal choice.

Radical Faeries are generally politically progressive, but do not discriminate on the basis of personal beliefs, political or otherwise. It is through the inclusion of others and the sharing of ideas that we understand what it is to be gay in this world.

The Faeries strongly believe in Radical Expression – that is an individual Faerie is urged and encouraged express all of themselves; while at the same time practising Radical Acceptance – accepting other faeries completely as they are, for who they are in the moment of the gathering.

Radical Faeries are identity-positive – that is to be sex positive, body positive, race/ethnically positive, anything-else-that-matters positive. Faerie space is accepting, and seeks to strip away the shame and guilt that gay/queer men may feel in their everyday lives.

The Radical Faeries are community-building, and believe it is through genuine connections and interpersonal relationships that we explore ourselves and create strength, knowledge and understanding for the future.

#### **What is a Gathering?**

Gatherings are a time of creating community, where we come together and explore what a “gay-centered” world can be. Gatherings are different to mainstream gay spaces such as bars, clubs and saunas which are primarily defined by a sexual dynamic, with Faerie Gatherings focusing on answering the following questions: what if everything was gay? What would our world look like if it was made just for us? What, in such a world would be important to us, what values would we have

and what rituals would we create?

Gatherings provide an opportunity for us to answer those questions and, if only for a few days, live in that world. They are a time for imagination, creativity, passion, sharing, teaching, learning, understanding and healing. Faerie Gatherings can take many forms, but there are two consistent features of most gatherings:

**Heart Circles** are the core of a gathering, where Faeries share their feelings, experiences and realities, speaking from the heart and accepting the experiences and realities of others openly and without judgement.

**Workshops** can be offered by any Faerie, and anybody can propose and lead a workshop, ritual or other activity.

Historically, Faerie Gatherings both in New Zealand and around the world have explored ideas, themes and passions including (but not limited to): nature and the environment; spirituality; coming out and the acceptance of self; sexuality and kinks; drug and substance use. The journey of any and all Faerie Gatherings are defined by the collective will of the Faeries who answer the call.

**Key Events for this Gathering** Although the majority of this gathering will be co-created by Faeries during the Gathering, the following events are being prepared in advance for this year's Beltane Celebrations:

**Night Circles** (During the evenings of Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> and Sunday 25<sup>th</sup>, after the evening meal.)

Night Circles are a space to acknowledge and celebrate the dual nature of gay men, and we will be creating a relaxed and intimate space near a bonfire for massage circles, cuddle puddles, music and merriment, stolen kisses, quiet conversation, naked moonbathing, frolicking, moments for lovers to disappear into the darkness to ignite private passions, or chances of spontaneous pleasures open for the world to see without shame or guilt. The Night Circles will be held near the fire bath, and there will be a sweat lodge and communal sleeping tent in close proximity to the Circle.

**Floralia visit to the Takaka Markets** (Morning of Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> of October)

To Honor the ancient Festival of Floralia, the gathered Faeries will be donning their finest attire, beating their faces, glittering up their beards and heading *en masse* to the Takaka Markets with baskets of flowers as gifts for the locals. We shall frolic among the ageing hippie population of Takaka, leaving a trail of colour, delight, chaos, biodegradable sparkles, and confused farm boys in our wake!

**Beltane Feast / Talent-No Talent Show** (Evening Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> of October)

Beltane is a Gaelic festival held in the halfway point between the spring equinox and the summer solstice. It marks the beginning of summer where rituals are performed to protect the crops and people and to encourage growth. Special bonfires are kindled, and their flames, smoke and ashes are deemed to have protective powers. Previous Gatherings in New Zealand have featured a Talent/No Talent show where the gathered faeries entertain each other with their stunning array of talent or lack thereof – but this year we will be combining the Talent/No Talent show with a Beltane Feast, a sumptuous, hedonistic evening of frivolity and pleasure with music, talent/no talent performances and three contests:

The laurel of the Cockroach Bard for best telling of a story from Gay or Radical Faerie History;

The wreath of the Twitter Jester for the best telling of a joke;

The garland of Suspect Goddess, for the best performance of Drag or Gender Fuckery.

These contests will be fiercely contested, and we urge you to prepare your performances well in advance of the gathering!

---

#### THE DETAILS:

**Location** All gay men are warmly invited to join this Gathering of the Radical Faeries to celebrate Beltane at Autumn Farm in Takaka, Golden Bay, home to our most honourable and esteemed Peter Finlayson and Pete Banham. Autumn Farm is a clothing optional, eco-friendly accommodation with a warm, inclusive social atmosphere. Please note that Autumn Farm is a dog-free venue.

**Time and Date** The gathering will take place from Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> to Monday 26<sup>th</sup> of October 2020. The opening ceremony

will take place after sunset on Thursday, and will end at midday Monday 26<sup>th</sup>. Given that Gatherings provide a rare opportunity to form a gay-centred community, and to maximise the positive experience for all who attend, there is a clear expectation for those who answer the call to be present for the entire Gathering. We strongly urge those wishing to attend to arrange their transport as to be there the entire time. If you are unable to make such arrangements we ask that you reflect upon the experience of the other faeries before deciding to attend this Gathering.

**Confidentiality** In order to create an environment of openness, love, honesty and candour without reservation there is an **explicit expectation of confidentiality** regarding all happenings, discussions and conversations from the opening to closing ceremonies of this Gathering. It is expected all who attend will agree that they may only discuss anything that happens during the Gathering with others who attended, and that any faerie who attended will seek the explicit permission of the other attending faerie before discussing any matter regarding the Gathering. Breaching this expectation after the Gathering will affect the ability to attend future Gatherings organised by QR's Howl and/or Ribbonwood.

**Registration** If you would like to attend this gathering please email [radicalfaeries@maider.org.nz](mailto:radicalfaeries@maider.org.nz) One of the QR's Howl or Ribbonwood will respond to your email and take you through the registration process.

**Cost** The Faerie Fee for this Gathering is \$120. This includes the cost of the food and a campsite for your tent. Details for payment will be provided when registering. A statement of accounts for the gathering will be emailed after the Gathering, with an option to either donate any excess funds to the Faerie Fund, to Autumn Farm, or to be reimbursed on a pro rata basis.

**Faerie Fee Fund** We operate a 'NOTALOF' policy (no one turned away for lack of funds). If the registration cost is a problem please email [radicalfaeries@maider.org.nz](mailto:radicalfaeries@maider.org.nz)

For this gathering, in acknowledgement of the remote location of Autumn Farm, there will be limited funds to assist in helping people travel to and from the Gathering – these funds will be prioritised for Elder Faeries, Faeries with accessibility requirements, or Faeries who live on fixed incomes, who would otherwise be unable to attend the gathering.

There are also limited funds available to assist with appropriate accommodation for Elder Faeries, or Faeries with accessibility requirements.

If you would like to contribute to our Faerie Fund you are most welcome to do so. To make a contribution, include the extra funds when you pay your registration fee. These funds will support those in need in their attendance of the Gathering. Your contribution is very much appreciated.

**Accommodation** If you do not wish to camp at the gathering, there are other accommodation options available at additional cost:

Dorm Room (six-beds, and includes bedding and towels): \$75 for the Gathering;

Private Rooms or Cabins (can be shared, includes bedding and towels): \$175 for the Gathering.

Please notify the QR while registering if you would like to book either of these options. Please note they will fill up quickly. Priority for the rooms attached to the main house will be given to Elder Faeries, or Faeries with accessibility requirements. Payment for these accommodation options must be made directly to Autumn Farm, with details on how to make these payments provided during Registration.

**Food** In the Spirit of the First Faeries and environmental consciousness, most meals at this Gathering will be vegetarian, with limited meat options to supplement dietary requirements or preferences. Efforts will be made to limit packaging and waste. All meals will be prepared on a communal basis, with faeries being asked to volunteer to assist with the preparation, serving and clean up of all meals. If you have specific dietary requirements please let us know during registration, and all reasonable efforts will be made to ensure everyone has something to eat at all meals.

**Travel** Given the recent Covid-19 crisis, travel options to and from Takaka are likely to be more expensive than in previous years. We urge all faeries wishing to join the Gathering to register and book their travel options early, particularly if they are flying. Information will be collected during registration to facilitate ride sharing in the South Island.

There will be a Cavalcade of Faeries allowing for ride sharing in the North Island – starting in Auckland on the morning of Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> of October with pickups or more vehicles joining in Hamilton, Taupo, Palmerston North, or any of the smaller towns en route, finishing in Wellington on the evening of the same day. The option of accommodation and a communal meal will be provided at Koromiko Lodge in Wellington, with the Ferry crossing booked for the next morning, where the traveling faeries will be met by van to drive to Autumn Farm. The Cavalcade will return to Wellington on Monday 26<sup>th</sup>, with the option to spend the night at Koromiko Lodge, returning to Auckland by the evening of Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> of October. The cost of the North Island Cavalcade will be provided closer to the gathering.

**Alcohol and Substances** Moderate and social use of alcohol and substances will be acceptable from the evening of Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> to Monday 25<sup>th</sup> of October at the following: The pre-dinner cocktail hour, whether an alcoholic and non-alcoholic cocktail will be available in a social setting; Limited table wine during the evening meal; and ,moderated and considerate use of alcohol and substances during the Night Circles (see below). Hedonistic but considerate use of alcohol and substances is accepted during the Beltane Feast / Talent-No Talent Show.

There will be a Focused Heart Circle on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> of October where the gathered faeries can share and reflect on their experiences and history with alcohol and substances, to set individual and group intentions and expectations, and so Faeries who have faced challenges with alcohol and substances may seek affirmation and understanding from the gathered Faeries to support and assist them in remaining sober but still fully engaged and participating throughout the gathering.

The ingredients for the cocktail hour and the table wine for evening meals and the Beltane Feast / Talent-No Talent Show will be provided during the gathering, **we ask that you only bring alcohol and substances with a strong intention that they be used socially and shared with others** at the Night Circles, or if you would like to bring something special to be shared at the Beltane Feast / Talent-No Talent Show.

If you have any questions or concerns in regards to Alcohol and Substances, we strongly urge you to bring these up in discussion with QR's Howl or Ribbonwood while registering.