

First Northwest Regional Labyrinth Gathering in Oregon

Was a Labyrinth Lover's Dream

By Eunice Schroeder

Kay Kinneavy of Oregon had a dream, a vision, a crazy idea. First, it was to find and walk all the labyrinths in Oregon. As they say, the rest is history. Kay believed. And about a dozen labyrinthites came together and created (in a ridiculously short period of time) the *Northwest Regional Labyrinth Gathering*, April 28-29, 2006.

Thanks to Carolynne Fairweather, labyrinth lover and chaplain at Legacy Meridian Park Hospital in Tualatin (just south of Portland), Oregon we had our wonderful location—the Community Health Education Center adjacent to the hospital and a short walk from their beautiful garden labyrinth. A gazillion emails later we had our top-of-the-line speakers and presentations. Our hats are still off to *The Labyrinth Society* for their gracious, practical, and generous help on every level of the planning. Jeff and Kimberly Saward started off the 2-day event (that felt like a ‘family reunion’!) with a ‘smashing’ lecture and slide show followed Saturday by great workshops. Also presenting were: Lisa Gidlow Moriarty: “Creating Labyrinths—Anywhere, Anytime;” and Mary Jo Chaves, Gloria Jost, and Renette Meltebeke: “The Labyrinth—An Interfaith Approach.”

Being web-footed Oregonians, we did worry about rain. But the day of the Gathering dawned bright and unseasonably hot and dry. As a result the lawn outside was covered with an amazing variety of home-grown labyrinths that the 123 registered folks walked. In the center of the building was a large open foyer that became our Labyrinth Marketplace with 15 outstanding vendors. This gave a real sense of community. Networking was built into the schedule with

informal lunch groups discussing labyrinth topics such as “Garden Labyrinths” or “School Labyrinths.” Communal labyrinth walks included live harp music and colorful festive prayer shawls that we literally picked out of the trees surrounding the hospital’s *Seasons of Life* garden labyrinth.

Participants had this to say about this amazing event: *Loved the sense of connectedness.... Amazing camaraderie!..... Good balance of structured and unstructured time.... No words can describe the love I felt..... Nothing short of magical!*

For more pictures, go to www.kinneavy.com/nrlg