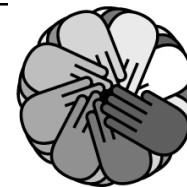


Insights



The Newsletter of the Discovery Community, Inc.

January 5, 2005

President's Day Weekend Retreat 2005

Friday February 18th - Monday, February 21st

Brooktrails Lodge—Willits, CA

Register Early for discounted prices!!!

President's Day Weekend Preview

Join us for the first retreat of 2005! The President's Day weekend retreat will be held at an exciting new location. We will be at Brooktrails Lodge in Willits.

(www.brooktrailsodge.com) This wonderful site is nestled in the redwoods of northern California, has hiking trails, motel style accommodations, and an outdoor hot tub. There are several meeting rooms and even a dance hall with a stage (great for the No Talent/Talent show)!

The retreat committee (Bob Ke vess, Gary Fenske, Calvin Sleppy, Matt Scovern) is working to put together workshops and activities for the retreat. Some of the topics we are building around are Appreciation, Life Balance, Communication, Spirituality, Relationship, Touch, etc. We will update the website and phone line with more information as it becomes available. If you have a workshop idea that you would like the team to consider, or you would like to lead a workshop or activity, please contact Matt Scovern at msscovern@yahoo.com or call the Discovery phone line and leave a message.

Throughout the weekend, you will have opportunities to hike in the beautiful redwood setting, take a workshop, play games, read a good book, dance the night away—whatever feels good for you. Remember, at Discovery, we promote a safe and non-judgmental atmosphere, personal growth, community, and friendship. With this in mind, all our events, including weekend retreats are drug and alcohol free. We look forward to seeing you at this retreat. Come join us at this wonderful new location. Let's kick off 2005 together!

Giving Thanks with Discovery-2004

On Thanksgiving Day, Discovery hosted a dinner and social event at a large private home in the East Bay hills to give thanks and be together with both new and familiar friends. As a member of the committee that organized this event, I'm pleased to report that it was a great success. Other members of the organizing committee included Howard Steiermann, Douglas Mitchell, Greg Sock, and Andrew Diamond. I'd like to say a few words about how each of the committee members contributed to the success of this event, but before that, I think a word or two about the history of Giving Thanks with Discovery 2004 is in order.

The Discovery Community has traditionally held a 4-day weekend retreat on Thanksgiving. Attendance at this retreat was decreasing over the years and last year's retreat was not well attended, and the organization lost \$3,000 on the event. In an effort to better understand this outcome, and learn what the community desired as a possible replacement for a Thanksgiving weekend retreat, the Board of Directors conducted an online survey of the community. The significant results from the respondents, as interpreted by the committee, indicated that future Thanksgiving events should involve less time, distance, and expense for participants.

Based on this information, the Giving Thanks with Discovery organizing committee brainstormed during our initial meetings about what kind of event would best meet the desires of the community. We arrived at a general outline that the event should be on Thanksgiving Day, that it should include a traditional Thanksgiving meal, and include both structured and unstructured activities. Our next problem was to find a suitable venue, and someone to cater the meal.

Howard graciously opened his home for all of our committee meetings. During our initial meetings, we created a list of potential venues and divided it among the committee members to inquire about availability. This became problematic, as few retreat centers and rental properties are available for only Thanksgiving Day. Thankfully, Douglas came to rescue, as he would many times during the planning and execution of this event.

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A Message from the President *A Time For Reflection*

I have always enjoyed the New Year's Holiday. Not just because I got a day off from work and we would no doubt celebrate with champagne, but because it was a built in opportunity to reflect on times past and times to come. What were the things I achieved in the previous year and what did I want to accomplish in the new year. I know resolutions are not in style anymore, but I always at least liked to look forward to achieving some goals in the next year. I'd like to take a moment to reflect on the Discovery Community, where it's been and where it is heading.

Discovery had many successes in 2004. We held 3 wonderful retreats celebrating the many gifts of the gay community. On President's Day weekend, we explored "New Beginnings" at Enchanted Hills Retreat Center in the Napa Valley, a favorite site amongst our community since it was formed in 1986. Although the weather was sometimes challenging, the intimate nature of that smaller group is always what I enjoy most. Memorial Day returned us to Saratoga Springs, a wonderful site in Lake County, where we explored the theme of "Transformations." The many activities outdoors and in the beautiful Heart Lodge kept us enthralled throughout the weekend. "Collaboration Makes Community" was the theme at our last retreat of 2004 at the rustic Camp Gualala on the Gualala river. The site is always a draw because of its natural beauty and the committee brought to us wonderful workshops and activities, including Casino Night, which I am sure we'll see again.

Discovery also provided much needed social activities throughout the year to keep us connected between the major weekends. Apart from the many potluck parties we had, we enjoyed Games Night, a Day at the Zoo, Retro TV Night, An Evening of Conversation, just to name a few. Not only did we get to enjoy these fun activities, but did so in the company of the wonderful men this community attracts.

2004 also brought challenges. The national political scene dominated much of our thoughts in 2004. With gay rights being denied and proposed throughout the country, it was a hard year to be a gay man, despite the fact that we live at least in the most welcoming part of the country. The lagging economy finally caught up with Discovery as well. We failed to achieve our financial goals and launched a fundraising campaign to make up some of the losses. We hope to raise \$7000 over the next 3 years to ensure Discovery can operate safely and weather the economic downturns in the future.

So what, you may ask, is ahead of us? Many good times, I assure you. The community remains strong and is always attracting new people to it. About 1/3 of all of our participants are people who are trying Discovery for the first time. Discovery provides the much needed space for gay men to connect with each other and build community, two things men say they need in their lives. Nevertheless, we held a town hall meeting in November to explore this very question.

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Giving Thanks with Discovery — 2004 (continued from page 1)

His friend and former employer offered her home to Discovery for this event. Douglas also offered to personally cater it. He and Andrew prepared flyers to promote the event and distributed them in various locations thought the City, the East Bay, and at other Discovery events.

Howard, as a past board member, retreat leader, and frequent retreat "camp counselor" served as an excellent sounding board for the flurry of ideas that the committee generated. I, as a current board member, served as liaison between the committee and the board. Additionally, I prepared the database of participants in order to provide details about the event as the day approached. Greg Sock (a.k.a. our dear and lovely Hyacinth), accepted a job in Portland, Oregon soon after we began to meet (we hope you're doing well, Greg, and look forward to seeing you at a retreat soon!).

The work of the committee as a whole, and each member's commitment, helped to ensure the success of this event, but I really can't emphasize enough the magnificent contribution that Douglas Mitchell made. In addition to efforts that I've already mentioned, Douglas coordinated a slate of volunteers who attended the event: Bob Keves (a.k.a. Doctor Bob) coordinated all music for this event and provided shuttle service from Fruitvale BART station to the house, Roy Schachter led a large group activity about thankfulness during which everyone was allowed to share thoughts and feelings about this day and its meaning to them. Antonio Aguilar (who was unable to attend the event) assisted Douglas with advance food preparation, Charlie Fernandez helped Howard greet participants as they arrived. In addition, many of the participants just chipped in to help clean up or do whatever was necessary (thank you Peter S. for fixing the sound system!). Thanks to you all!

The board of Discovery thinks that Giving Thanks with Discovery 2004 was a move in the right direction. We listened to the community and we responded with an event that differed significantly from previous Thanksgiving retreats, yet appears to have met the needs and desires of a large portion of the community. Giving Thanks with Discovery 2004 may serve as a model for future Discovery Thanksgiving events. We hope that Thanksgiving 2005 will be as successful, but we need your input, suggestions, and participation. It's never too early to begin planning for next year's event, so if you would like to assist with planning and presenting Discovery's 2005 Thanksgiving event, and especially if you have ideas or suggestions about a good location in which to hold this event, please contact us (see opposite column).

—Dan Douglass

Discovery Contact Information

Discovery Community, Inc.
2215-R Market Street PMB# 282
San Francisco CA 94114
(415) 419-3559

www.discovery-community.org

A Message from the President

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Some organizational changes were recommended, most notably to create more communication within the community. The board of directors is committed to increasing communication to all the community; please let us know how we can do better. You can find on our website (www.discovery-community.org) many organizational details and ways to contact us with your concerns.

Other ideas about creating different kinds of weekend getaways were explored, such as retreats on non-holiday weekends, or more upscale events like cruises, etc. We welcome these ideas and hope that you will continue to dream up what this community of men can be. Please join us at our next Town Hall Meeting on January 30th, from 3-6 PM, at Golden Gate Lutheran, 601 Dolores St at 19th.

Mostly, it is important to acknowledge the men of Discovery Community as our greatest success. Many of us would admit that it is the people of Discovery, in addition to the wonderful activities, that keep us coming back. I'd like to acknowledge all the volunteers that made our events come to fruition. Your contributions made a difference in the lives of countless men and helped build our community. We are deeply grateful and hope that you will continue to find ways to support the gay community. I'd especially like to acknowledge Andrew Diamond, Dibbers Althouse, Michael MacDonald, and Amelito Enriquez who have concluded their service on the board of directors. It is a big commitment they made and we appreciate their selfless service. We welcome new board members Mick Pitash, Jerry Maynard, George Fuentes, and Patrick Barresi, and applaud their willingness to serve in this capacity.

On behalf of the board, I want to wish you all a happy new year and we hope to see you throughout the year at our events.

Mark Rumpler
President, Board of Directors.

CAMP DISCOVERY REGISTRATION

You can register online using a credit card at www.discovery-community.org. Or, fill out the form below, pay by check or credit card, and mail to Discovery Community, Inc., 2215-R Market Street PMB# 282, San Francisco CA 94114.

A deposit of \$50 (non-refundable) will hold your place until 2/7/05. **Payment in full must be received no later than 2/7/05. Cancellations after this date may or may not be refundable.**

Men's Weekend fee includes all activities, meals and accommodations. In order to continue offering our weekends to men at all economic levels, we have adopted a sliding-scale fee structure:

If your income is	Early Bird (before 1/24/05)	After 1/24/05
Less than \$30,000	\$225.00	\$245.00
\$30,000 - \$40,000	\$240.00	\$260.00
\$40,000 - \$50,000	\$255.00	\$275.00
\$50,000 - \$60,000	\$275.00	\$300.00
\$60,000 or more	\$300.00	\$325.00

To request a confidential sponsorship, please read and sign below.

For reasons of financial need, I request that some portion of my fee be paid from the Tom Devine Sponsorship Fund. I understand that my request must be accompanied by my payment of the \$50 deposit, that it must be received by Discovery two weeks prior to the Men's Weekend, and that I will be contacted by the Treasurer to determine the sponsorship amount. In the event this sponsorship is not awarded, my deposit will be fully refunded.

Signature _____ Date _____
(Sign only to request a sponsorship)

Want to Donate?

As a 501(c)3 organization, all your donations to Discovery Community are tax-deductible. Your donations help us meet our operating expenses, provide sponsorships, and produce free social events. Simply fill out this form, enclose a check or put your credit card information below and send to:

Discovery Community
2215R Market Street, PMB#282
San Francisco, CA 94114

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State, Zip: _____

Card Type: AMEX VISA MC DISCOVER

Credit Card #: _____

Expiration Date: _____

Signature: _____

Want to Volunteer?

Discovery can always use your help. Do you have a special skill we don't know about? Do you want to plan or throw fabulous events? Do you want to work on retreats? Fundraise? Let us know. Contact us at (415) 419-3559 or www.discovery-community.org

Camp Discovery Registration (continued from previous column)

So that those of lesser means may participate in Discovery events, I request that some portion of my fee be paid from the Tom Devine Sponsorship Fund. I understand that my request must be accompanied by my payment of a \$10 deposit, that it must be received by Discovery three weeks prior to this event, and that I will be contacted by the Treasurer to determine the sponsorship amount. In the event this sponsorship is not awarded, my deposit will be fully refunded.

Signature _____ Date _____

Please **CHECK YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS INFORMATION ON THE REVERSE SIDE OF THIS FORM, CIRCLE YOUR CHOICE OF FEE ABOVE** and complete the following information **printing neatly**.

Phone: (h) _____ (w) _____

E-mail: _____

Birthday (month / day): _____

Registration Fee: \$ _____

Scholarship donation: \$ _____

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

If paying with check, make payable to Discovery Community, Inc. If paying with credit card, please note that a service fee of 1.9% rounded to the dollar will be added to your total. Minimum service fee is \$3.00. Your registration will appear as a purchase from Acteva.

Credit card used: Visa MasterCard Amex

Card Number: _____

Expiration Date: _____

Exact name on card: _____

Signature: _____

Upcoming Events:

Discovery Ice Skating — Saturday, January 8, 2005, 9-11 p.m.
 Yerba Buena Ice Skating Arena, 750 Folsom St. between 3rd and 4th Streets, near the SF Museum of Modern Art and Moscone Center, San Francisco (four blocks from Powell St. Muni/BART station). Cost is \$10 per person which includes skate rental. For further information please contact Gary Winter at (415) 553-4049.

Discovery Community Town Hall Meeting — Sunday, January 30, 2005, 3-6 p.m.
 Golden Gate Lutheran Church, 601 Dolores Street @ 19th.

Discovery Bowling Night—Saturday, February 5, 4-6 p.m.
 Yerba Buena Bowling Center The cost is \$20 per participant which includes shoe rental. For further information contact Ricardo Montero at (415) 643-0165

President's Day Weekend Retreat 2005—Friday, February 18th - Monday, February 21st,
 See page 1 for further details. There will be a send-off party on the weekend prior to this retreat. Time and location to be determined. Check the website for details as they become available.

**Watch for more events in the coming months.
 Check for updates at www.discovery-community.org or call us at (415) 419-3559.**

Temp–Return Service Requested

2215-R Market Street, PMB# 282
 San Francisco CA 94114

