

THE HARVEST GATHERING  
September 14th through the 16th (Fri-Sun)  
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I have written about the yearly Harvest Gathering held on the Earthwork Farm near Lake City, Michigan on the third weekend in September each year, many times. That is because I have gone to it many years now and each year am knocked out about how rare and warm an event it is. There is nothing like it.

Why else would hundreds of musicians who have played at festivals all summer long (and are sick of them) gather to play music with and for one another? Think about it. And it is designated a 'gathering', and not just another festival and it lives up to its name. It is a gathering of a special clan, but what clan is that?

I mentioned that the Harvest Gathering is all about music and musicians, but that alone is not enough to get me there. I have had a lifetime of music events, festivals, and so on.

No, aside from the fact that I love music, what draws me to the Harvest Gathering is the community of people who come together for this yearly event. No age group dominates. There are people of all ages, and I mean it runs the gamut. And the gathering is totally family-friendly. There are tons of kids and lots of geezers like myself. And it is a warm and friendly place where new friendships form; it is still possible to find good friends!

When I attended my first Harvest Gathering (many years ago now), I had to learn to hug all over again, because I had not seen hugging and warmth like this since the 1960s and what we called Love-Ins. In fact, it can be hard to walk down one of the roads at the gathering without a lot of hugs being asked and answered. It slows things down, but that is usually just what I need anyway. Every river has at least a cove or two. The Harvest Gathering has many.

And when they say 'gathering', they don't just mean one-big gathering. The gatherings are innumerable and everywhere, small, middle-sized, and large. People in groups sharing all kinds of things are all around. Aside from the four main stages, where music is happening all the time, there is music played in the kitchens, music in the food tents, music on the grass, and music all through the campground area. There is even a large drum kiva way out on the property around a bonfire that must go on all night. I have visited it late at night, but never to the bitter end, if there is such a thing.

Usually, when I get up in the morning, the various bonfires are still going strong and any number of people are singing and carrying-on. They have been up all night. That I can tell.

There is also all kinds of natural food, including grass-fed burgers from highland cattle raised

right there on the farm. The lines at Bob's Burgers can be extensive. The food is good.

And there are tents where kids can do art, play games, and learn stuff. There are little circles in the woods where things are taught. There are roundtable discussions, and even a yearly basketball tournament, where a funny trophy is much sought after, a real hard-fought contest.

I could go on. I personally especially like the strings of lights that line the lanes between stages at night, making the whole evening like a dream, a phantasmagoria of lights and lightning bugs. Contrast this by looking up and watching the millions of Milky Way crystal-clear stars against a jet-black sky. The farm is far away from city lights.

Mornings are nippy this time of year, but the days are usually warm and the warmth lingers as the bonfires come alive in the dark. It is hard to describe, but if you have been to large festivals where everything is just too much, too glitzy, and too greedy, then the Harvest Gathering is the antidote for that. It is just big enough to function smoothly. It has the warmth of old friends found and new-friends made, places to gather and still 180 acres if you want some alone time, like taking a walk.

I have encountered nothing like it since the 1960s. The Harvest Gathering is precious to so many people, the one event in the year you don't want to miss. Here are the details. If you show up, be sure to say hello and even share a hug!

<http://earthworkharvestgathering.com/>