

ADVENTURES INTO THE LABYRINTH – AN ALL-DAY JOURNEY

Sunday, September 24, 2017

By Jodi Lorimer

- “This was an amazing day of labyrinth experiences...I’m filled up, thankful and eager to keep walking ...into fuller life.”
- “The whole thing was wonderful.”
- “I liked the chauffeured pilgrimage aspect, the weather ??, the organizational orderliness of it, the clarity of the plan and how we stuck to it, the great labyrinths, the personal stories attached to their creation, the food carts, the size of the group, the hospitality at Cerimon House, All good.”
- “Especially liked the ceremony experience.”
- “This was just super.”
- “Let’s do it again!”

These are just some of the comments the organizers of the LNN Labyrinth Adventure Tour received from a full-house during our first event of this kind. We couldn’t have had a more perfect day, sunny and in the low 70s, although we can’t claim any responsibility for that piece of luck. We were, however, very fortunate to have a dedicated and talented group of people come together to create what turned out to be an almost perfect full day of learning, walking and sharing labyrinths from Estacada to North Portland.



Led by local expert labyrinth designer and builder, Stephen Shibley, the group met at Cerimon House, a beautiful old building on NE 23rd, a nonprofit humanities and cultural arts organization located in what was an old Masonic Lodge, and a popular event space dedicated to building community and creativity. We got acquainted, snacked on muffins and fruit, coffeed up and set out bright and early at 9am.

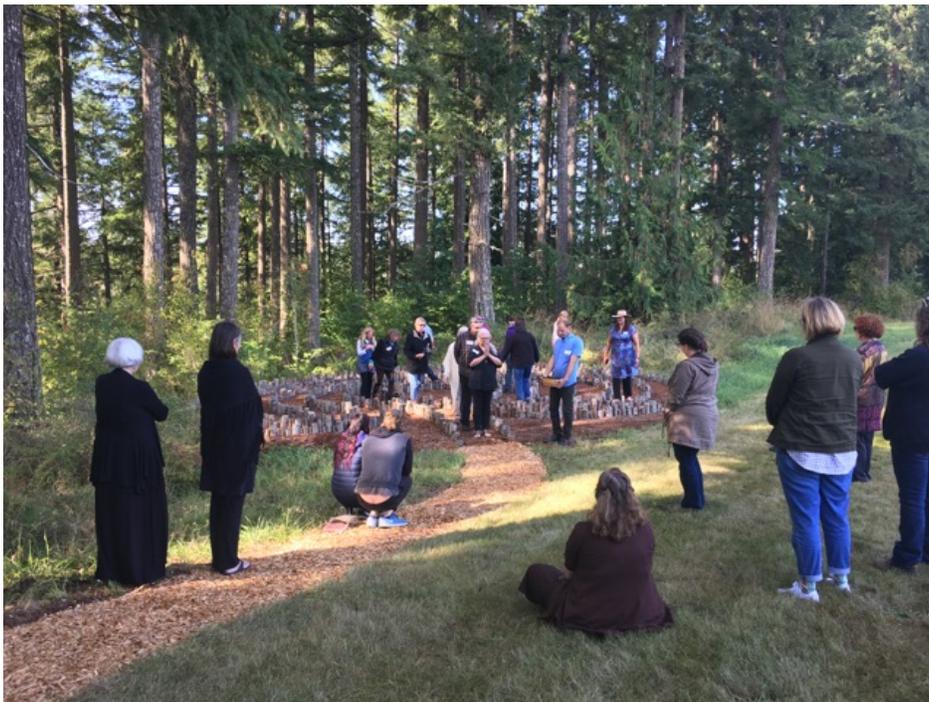
First stop was the Estacada Public Library. All of the labyrinths we visited that day excepting the beautiful Reims labyrinth at Cerimon House and a temporary one Traci made, were designed and built by Stephen. He introduced us to each one giving us detailed information about how they

were built and the story behind them. Each labyrinth, including Cerimon House’s Reims pattern, had a different energy and purpose so each provided us with gentle insights into how many

ways the labyrinth can respond to different needs. The first was an early construction of Stephen's, a Chartres pattern in stone, outside the Estacada Public Library. There, we each had an opportunity to say what had brought us on the Tour and there were many reasons. Some people had no experience with labyrinths at all, while some had been involved with them for many years. Some were interested in building their own labyrinths and wanted to know what was involved. Others were looking to introduce the labyrinth to a community, while some were drawn by their spiritual, healing and meditative potentials. There was a labyrinth for everyone on the Tour.

Inside the library, Traci McMerrit had created a spiral pattern with tape that would allow people to enter from one opening and leave from another which allowed for a smooth movement of people through the labyrinth. Before walking, and to get us all exercised, energized, and stress-relieved, she conducted a brief version of her "Laughing Labyrinth" workshop, which certainly achieved the objective!

We loaded back into our two vans and drove on to a very special visit to Stephen's parents' house to see the private labyrinth he created for his mother's birthday, which put him in solid with all the ladies. He told us the story of his ancestors' arrival via the Oregon Trail and their settling on a large tract of land to farm. Today, among other things, they have a sustainably run Christmas tree farm.



The labyrinth itself, nestled into a grove of trees overlooking a valley, is made of vertically-placed logs of alder and Douglas fir from their land. Many of us were quite affected by this emotionally powerful creation, rooted deeply into his family history and philosophy of caring for the land.

After a lunch stop at the Happy Valley Station where the selection of foods available from the carts was a challenge of its own, given the sumptuous choices, we moved on to Happy Valley City Hall.



This labyrinth has a healing and ceremonial vibe and will be a part of an additional build to eventually include a Veterans' Memorial. At the center is a fir tree that becomes a city Christmas tree in December. Sandra Walden created an altar and led us all in a moving and reflective ceremonial walk focused on personal exploration, healing and peace, which was accompanied by bells and rattle. In a kismet moment, Lauri Shainsky of Hidden Lakes Retreat offered to provide us with inspirational toning and the playing of a singing bowl.



The next labyrinth was also at a private residence. The woman who had commissioned Stephen to create this labyrinth suffered from Parkinson's Disease and had very specific considerations that needed to be addressed. The paths were smooth in some areas and stones were embedded in others to create a tactile sensation when walking barefoot. It was made of adobe-colored concrete and was sufficiently wide to allow for good balance.

At the center, Stephen had installed a large rock, naturally shaped like a seat so she could rest if need be.

Unfortunately, the client no longer lives there and he has not been able to return to finish the surrounding landscaping. Even so, the shade and fruit trees, and a visit by a very friendly black cat, contributed to the peaceful, healing and reflective feel of the place.

As we relaxed in the sun or shade, Randall Stuart of Cerimon House, a professional actor who has worked in New York, San Francisco and at the Ashland Shakespeare Festival, enchanted us all with the lovely story of a character from Shakespeare's "Pericles", Cerimon, for whom the House is named. In the dappled afternoon sun, we learned that Cerimon was a renowned physician in Ephesus who revived a woman thought to be drowned and reunited her with her lost child and husband. Coupled with Stephen's elegant, healing labyrinth, Randall's graceful tale of love and family reunion, and the affectionate black cat, it made for a magical, meditative time.



Our last stop was back at Cerimon House where we walked the unusual Reims pattern that celebrates community, the seasons, and celebrations throughout the year. At each of the four quadrants of the pattern, a 'harbor' was decorated with a meditational thought and appropriate items to further guide thoughtful reflection, as well as at the center. We had time for tea, wine and happy hour snacks and animated conversation about our wonderful day. Each participant received a Cerimon swag

bag with LNN wine glass and information about each of the presenters. We had a marketplace table of books, cards, glasses and sun catchers available for purchase. We all couldn't have been more delighted with the entire day. The contributions of all these talented people are greatly appreciated, including Theresa, Stephen's wife who drove one van while Stephen drove the other, helping to keep us all on schedule.

Having such a success under our belts has inspired us to do another of these events next summer or fall and other different events throughout the year. Stay tuned to LNN's new direction and energy! We'll be in touch.

About the Author:

Jodi Lorimer lives in Portland, Oregon. She is an active member of Labyrinth Network Northwest and has served on the LNN planning Circle for many years. She is also on the Board of The Labyrinth Society.