

# MenTaz 2017

## Absolute Presence

### Retreat Plan

May 25 to May 28, 2017  
Roberts Creek, BC

Creating healthy relationships  
between men without labels through  
unmediated experience in a  
temporary autonomous zone.



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## About Mentaz 2017

A network of friends has developed among the TAZmen, who have gathered annually for retreats since 2002. For the first 8 years, MenTaz was known as EmoTAZ, a not-for-profit annual gathering originally inspired by some writings of Hakim Bey who coined the term Temporary Autonomous Zone. A TAZ is a bubble in time and space without reference to others, in which anything can happen. A TAZ is not created by appropriating other cultural conventions. We have created our own over time and as every moment is created within an atmosphere of play and respect.

Women have been reinventing themselves since the suffragists while men have not considered their social roles, identity and relationships in such a significant way. The event is based on an idea that men learn most about themselves to build relationships with each other through physical activity. It has built brotherly connections between many who have attended. After more than a decade, this friendship has embraced female partners and entire families. Surveys indicated that TazMen found relationships with women had also improved. A majority reported right after the event that the experience was transformational in some way. MenTaz provides an opportunity to consider who we are as men now, without the constraints of religious, political and media labels.

The event framework is focused on activity. This has included martial arts, spinning vinyl, silkscreening, blacksmithing, horseback riding, massage, yoga, monkey chant, floor hockey, building a sweat lodge, ropes courses, food prep, boundary discovery explorations, floor hockey, lube wrestling, drumming, improv dance and performance.

A key ritual performed on the last evening is known as "Tribal Celebration." This experience involves the creation of temporary tribal markings with black light body paint on bare bodies to a background of electronic dance music with voice, dance and play.

### This year's Theme: Absolute presence

TAZmen participate in activities to realize unmediated experiential communication.

Unmediated means no interpretation by others through media. Media includes radio, television, internet, books or photos. We live in a universe of filtered words and pictures washing our brains, other people's ideas, some with good intentions, others driven to serve themselves only through the elemental entity called money involving deceit and war. Many are concerned about corporate media driving political agendas that do not serve universal well-being. We discourage all forms of mediated communication at the event, that is, ideas that come from outside through any technology that compromises our ability to be present with each other to build healthy relationships.

We have held absolute presence as an important objective from the beginning. Absolute presence is supported by activities that help us to focus on our current physical or emotional experience. These experi-



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ences can stem from feeling warm sunshine on our bodies to engaging in play as adults. We will challenge ourselves to ignore the constant voices in our heads that remind us about the past or anticipates the future. We will let go of expectations. We will experience the present from within our bodies. We will let go of judgements of ourselves and others based on conditioning from the past as dogma or media-reinforced patterning.

MenTaz provides an opportunity to communicate through activity, with authenticity and respect for each other, in the present, moment by moment. This year's theme emphasizes part of what we have always valued.

## A Camping Event

We gathered for 15 annual retreats at a forest conference centre operated by the University of British Columbia. Initially, we shared space in a big log cabin with access to other spaces. The wonderful lodge we used was demolished. It was becoming costlier each year.

Founder Eric and his partner Tom were fortunate to acquire 10 acres in upper Roberts Creek, now renovated to support not-for-profit activities that support relationship building and absolute presence away from the frenzied city. The primary building started as a large old log house, now embraced by a new structure with spaces to live and play. The site is surrounded on two sides by crown forest with 100 km of hiking and biking trails starting right on the property. Camp spots are available in a meadow and in the forest behind with reasonable accommodation for vehicle campers. A self-contained cabin is also available for activities like massage, for between-meal refreshments and snacks or just relaxing together. Tom and Eric expect no profit and the venue was approved by Directors on behalf of Members without the host's vote.

Food will be catered with two main meals each day and snacks in-between. Food is the big part of the event budget, but funds will be available as always to support proposals for special projects and activities.

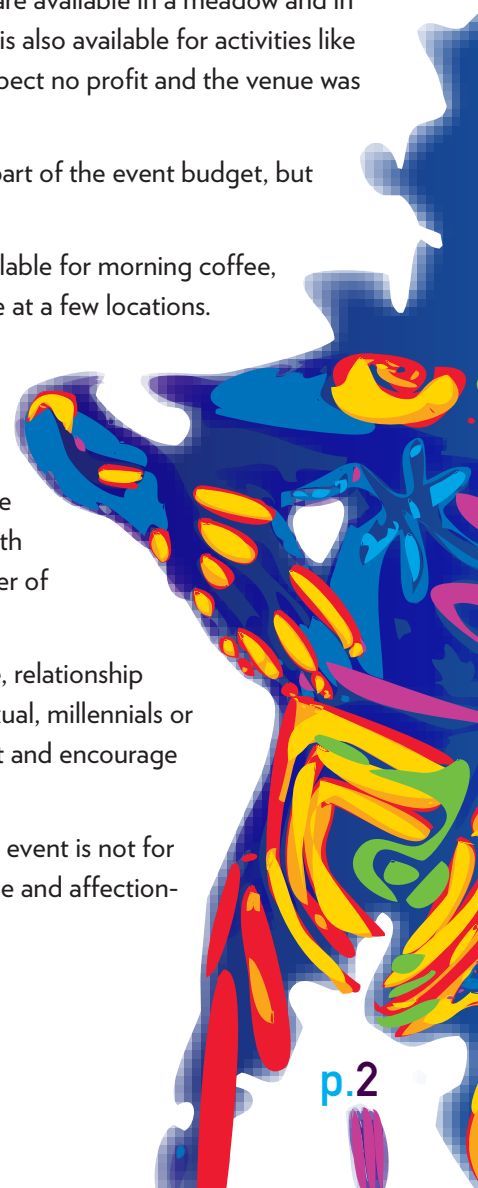
Porta-potties will be onsite and an outdoor shower available. A self-contained cabin will be available for morning coffee, and mid-day snacks. Power points for LED strings and charging mobile devices will be available at a few locations.

## Who will be there?

More than half of the men attending each year have come together at past events. Men who have attended before are known as TazMen. Those who have attended past events can become an Advocate for those who have never attended. New participants are welcomed as NuMen with a lower cost share. NuMen must identify and declare an Advocate to sign up. About one quarter of participants are new to the experience each year.

We all refuse labelling at the event. We don't define ourselves by our careers, financial privilege, relationship status, age or by which gender, age or body type invokes a sexual response. Gay, straight, bisexual, millennials or bommers, tall or short, black, brown, pink, yellow, red and blue are labels we refuse. We support and encourage friendship between the diverse men who share our values.

If you have difficulty communicating boundaries, whether from past abuse or conditioning, this event is not for you. If not, be conscious and respect other men's personal boundaries around physical challenge and affectionate play.



## Tazopia Principles

MenTAZ is produced by Tazopia Projects Society. The Society provides a financial and legal interface for banking and insurance. NuMen who become TazMen can apply to become Members after two retreats. Members elect Directors who manage the Society. Members pay token dues to manage administrative expenses. There is an Annual General Meeting each year to consider the Society's direction, projects and finances.

Tazopia has the following stated Principles:

**Now.** We celebrate being alive and present, without explanation or expectation.

**Trust.** We implicitly trust one another in an atmosphere of courtesy, safety and respect.

**Participation.** Inclusion has a cost, and that cost is full participation on all levels.

**Commitment.** We keep our word with extended families and ourselves.

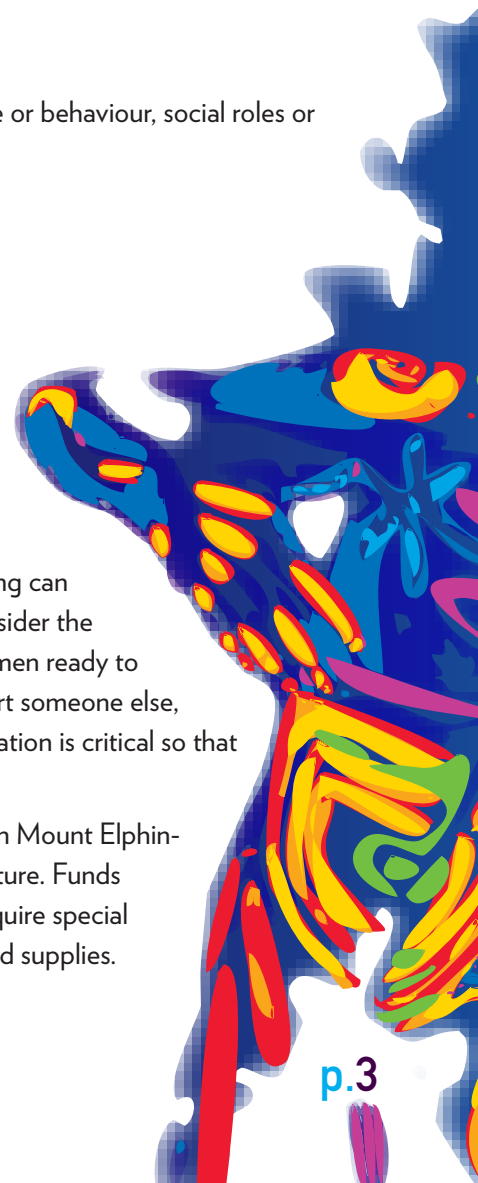
**Gifting.** We believe that a world of sustainable, shared abundance is possible.

**No labels.** We do not label ourselves or others based on sexual orientation, genes, appearance or behaviour, social roles or conventions, beliefs or history.

## Activities

What will happen, exactly? That question can only be answered after the event because anything can happen. What we do comes from you as a generator, facilitator or participant. Participate. Consider the Principles to co-organize the possibilities you'd like to explore. You will have a willing group of men ready to play along. It's up to you to enrol them with your idea through active communication, or support someone else, long before we get there. Start the event with all of that planning behind. Pre-event communication is critical so that we don't spend our few days figuring out what to do, how and led by whom.

Activities under consideration this year include: paint ball in the woods, a transcendental hike on Mount Elphinstone and a fireside ritual to consider presence. Early arrivals will help to create camp infrastructure. Funds to support typical activity proposals are already included in the budget. Some activities that require special equipment rental may require donations to make them possible, for example, paint ball gear and supplies.



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## Activities framework

Tazopia invites Members, past TAZmen and NuMen to build friendship through challenge, heart, and creative self-expression in a Temporary Autonomous Zone. This is the framework to help you think about how to engage each other:

**Challenge:** Many men like physical challenge. As an evolutionary driver, it ensured that the strongest food gatherers and protectors had reproductive priority. Consumerism uses this drive to take our money through non-participatory commercial sport. Challenge is almost always held in a win/lose frame. Consider ideas to explore physical challenge on a direct, personal level where everyone wins. In the past, physical challenge has been explored through introductory wrestling, axe-throwing and blowgun marshmallow fights in the forest.

**Heart:** Conscious men would rather hug than kill each other. We encourage structured and spontaneous ways to build stronger emotional connections with each other through touch. Touch builds trust. Respect emotional boundaries through clear communication. In the past, this has been explored through massage coaching, hybrid martial arts, paired yoga and just chilling.

**Rhythm:** Finding a shared rhythm through beat, chant or dance has been a part of many past MenTAZ retreats. Sharing a rhythm as heartbeat, by drumbeat or any rhythmic activity can create a sense of shared presence. We've played with drums, song, chants, breath, synthesizers and vocal sound loops.

**Play:** Play provides a useful way to discover challenge, heart and rhythm. As adults, we can choose to continue learning about each other and ourselves through play. Play includes the creation of collaborative art as performance or installation. Day-time activities to deliver an evening cabaret performance has been fun.

**When** proposing an activity, consider this framework to realize your expected outcome.

## Be a Chief

This will be a Temporary Autonomous Zone, where nothing is certain but anything can happen. Nothing happens without you engaging others. There is no distinction between volunteer and attendee. Everyone is a Chief. We are all responsible for everything. If something needs doing, do it.

To handle basics, certain roles are based on past needs met. Anyone can negotiate changes to their role. Some roles will overlap, others merge. On signup, you will be asked to be a Chief for some needed task.



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## Meals Chief

Help to set up and take-down meals, supporting catering as required.  
Purchase and manage snacks or non-alcoholic beverages to budget.  
Organize coffee, tea and other refreshments in cabin with ongoing cleanup.

## Spaces Chief

The Spaces Chief is responsible for:

- Transformation of spaces to celebrate our unique experience. This includes common room setup for Tribal Celebration as well as proposed alterations with fabric, lighting and props to other common areas including hallways but excludes kitchen.
- Indoor project room designations, from photography studio to optional chill space.
- Logistics to support transformation of other rooms to foster experiential communication as proposed by Activity Chiefs to meet their transport, power and other needs.

## Sound Chief

- Acquire by loan or rental all required sound equipment for Common Room, optional Chill Space, and to support optional Cabaret program.
- Assume full responsibility for access and use of equipment during the Retreat.

## Security Chief

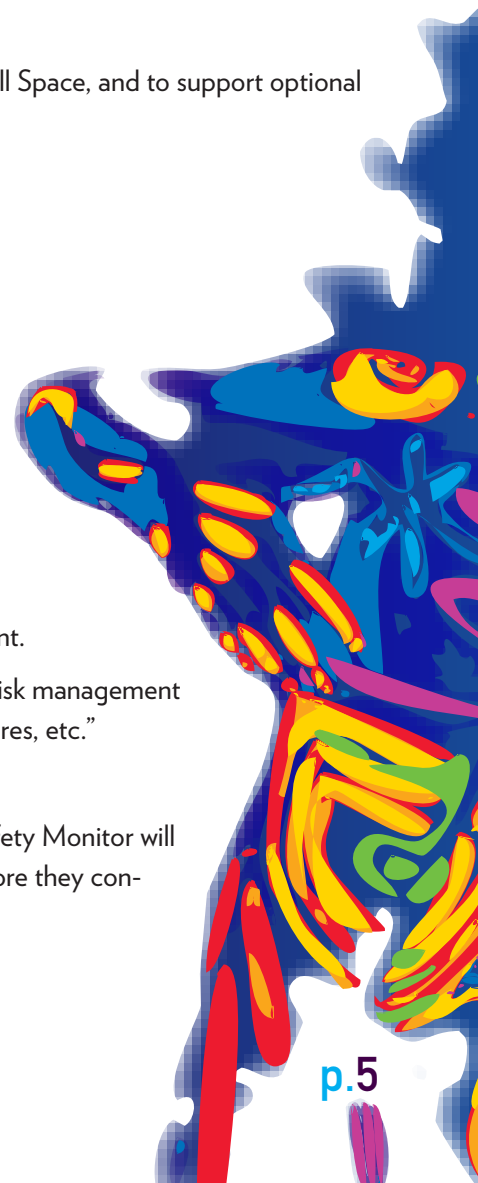
The Security Chief will engage Participants to ensure that a Security Monitor:

- is designated and trained for duration of retreat (24 hrs/day).
- identified to all Participants during daily group meetings called Circles.
- is responsible for assessing and managing any situation affecting physical or emotional well-being.
- contacts external services if required, e.g., ambulance, fire, police.
- procures signatures for supplementary waivers if required, e.g., rented paint ball equipment.

The Security Chief will ensure insurance compliance. Insurance requires “safety measures and risk management plans in force, i.e. parking, traffic, security, supervision, first aid, emergency evacuation procedures, etc.”

The following tasks fall under the Security Chief:

**Monitors:** Responsible for safety and security 24 hours throughout the event. An “on-duty” safety Monitor will be identified by a special vest. Location of designate(s) will be determined at Circles before they conclude.



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**Emergencies:** The Security Chief handles medical or site urgencies if required. The Security Chief also ensures that someone is designated to be first point of contact in case of authorities arriving onsite due to neighbor complaints about noise, vehicles, etc.

**Camp** placement, traffic and parking. Ensures that no vehicles block roads for supply access or in case of emergency.

**First aid:** Ensures that the Monitor designate knows where first aid supplies are located, emergency telephone location, and degree of medical certification, if any, held by attendees to support appropriate response level. The Security Chief will ensure that medical and fire safety gear and plans are onsite and known to security monitors.

**Emergency** evacuation: An emergency evacuation plan is included as part of an escalating emergency response strategy will be announced during the opening Circle.

## Trace Chief

The Leave-No-Trace Chief will ensure that the venue is cleaner on departure than it was on arrival, leaving no trace. This role:

- enrolls Chiefs as needed, prior to and during the event
- ensures that personal gear and common supplies are stored appropriately to minimize safety hazards and logistic constraints.
- ensures daily cleanup including after meals, social spaces each morning, other spaces after use.
- ensures that tools and supplies are acquired and transported prior to the Retreat, e.g., sufficient rags, cleaning agents and buckets.
- coordinates all pack out, takedown and cleanup activities on Sunday morning.

## Transport Chief

- Responsible for supporting transport vehicle within budget, enrolling crew as required, picking up, delivering and returning any retreat supplies including but not limited to:
- Storage: black lights, fabrics
- Incidental food
- Activity supplies as requested by Activity Chiefs, e.g., massage tables
- Sound system and related gear

## Setup Chief

- Shower: Participants beginning as early as Tuesday will be involved with setting up an outdoor shower. The venue septic system cannot absorb waste water from 40 men for the event duration.
- Power: Some will want to have power to their site. Extensions with waterproofed connection points will need to be provided and established. With power available throughout the site, night lighting of pathways would be helpful and festive.





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- Storage: A special project proposed earlier by one of the Directors could involve creation of a small structure to store Tazopia assets like black lights and fabrics. The storage building might be combined with a wood-fired sauna in progress, along with propane-fired hot water on demand for shower.
- Woods cleanup: Potential camp sites and an area prepped for paintball or disc golf could be created. Helping to remove deadfall around the property for general fire safety would be greatly appreciated.
- Camp spots and platforms: Flat, dry spots for campers could be created on the property with a weed whacker, powered pruners, gravel and old deck platforms.

## Activity Chiefs

An Activity Chief will work with you to develop a platter of possibilities to realize this year's theme,

If you propose an idea, you will engage others to consider level of interest, enroll others to play with you at the event and manage an approved budget if needed to facilitate the activity.





## What's going on?

### Arrival and Departure

By signing up, you agree to arrive before first Circle on Thursday night and stay through Closing Circle Sunday at noon. You may arrive earlier in the week for setup and informal camp time if you can.

### Activities

Activities are the core of the event. After signing up, help to create and support them. Be prepared for the activities you are considering as announced before the event. Except for Circles, Tribal Celebration and cleanup, you are not obligated to participate in any activities that do not inspire you.

### Circles

Everyone attends brief gatherings called Circles around meal time for less than one hour. Circles are held every evening to make sure that everyone is accounted for, to share information about upcoming activities, manage logistics and check in with everyone else. By signing up, you agree to attend all Circles.

If you are a NuMan, check in with your Advocate any time about your questions or concerns outside of Circles.

### Tribal Celebration

Celebration on Saturday night is all about unmediated, unfacilitated play. You'll get a buzz from the full body paint ritual under blacklight to big beats. Expect emotional connection through painting, dancing, contact improv, spontaneous percussion, chants and laughter.

### What to wear, or not

We wear whatever we want, or not much at all. From furry costumes to tuxedos, everything we cover ourselves with is a costume. Play with it. Or, not.

If you would be uncomfortable at Wreck Beach, this event is not for you. Nudity around the hot tub is typical, only after a shower.



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## Gifting

A sustainable future may be enabled if we learn to gift others instead of bargaining for deals that work only in our favour. This event gives you an opportunity to gift others, not just with snacks and things, but by financially supporting others and rewarding others with a memorable experience.

## Where, exactly?

The site is 12 minutes from the Langdale Ferry Terminal near Gibsons, BC. This ferry runs every 1-2 hours, a 40-minute ride from Horseshoe Bay near Vancouver, BC.

Harbour Air offers float plane flights to/from Sechelt (20 minute drive) and Vancouver Airport, Nanaimo and Victoria.

Ride share if possible to minimize vehicles taking over camping spots. Contact the transport/parking Chief to arrange for pickup if you are arriving on bus or by float plane.

## What else?

After signup, you will be invited to join a common email list to ask questions, share ideas and co-create the event. You'll receive all other details by email one week before the event.



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## Camping and house rules

Be self-contained. Potable water is onsite from a deep well, tested safe and clean. Porta-potties will be available.

Please respect the following:

- Amplified sound outside is only organized through the Sound Chief.
- Main kitchen is to be accessed only by caterers, hosts, and designated Chiefs.
- Master bedroom in the main house is for hosts only unless otherwise announced or invited.
- Socks, slippers and bare feet only inside buildings.
- Sleep in your tent, not in a social space.
- Respect site well water as the special and limited resource it is. Please don't leave taps or hoses running.
- Electric generators are not invited, your own solar power is encouraged. Camp electrical connections will not be able to power your electric heater.
- The only dog onsite will be the host's border collie puppy, Quasar. She likes snacks but they are not good for her digestion or behaviour. Remember that a large number of strangers on property she feels it is her job to protect is stressful. Do not let her out of the house and take full responsibility to return her if you do.
- Roads need to be left unblocked in case of urgency or emergency.
- Leave no trace, all the time. It makes Sunday morning cleanup so much easier.
- Smoke if you must on concrete porches, parking lots or gravel roads (smoking in the forest, in buildings or on wooden decks is more than stupid).
- Buildings are on septic systems with a sump pump to process what has gone in one end of your body and out another, and only what comes out of your body. If you're eating stuff like dental floss or condoms, you can't use any toilet on site. No watermelons in portapotties, please.



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## Signup

Please review the following before signing up.

### Budget

MenTaz is budgeted to cover event hard costs with a buffer to ensure that the Society will continue. The budget has been reviewed and approved by Directors. Final accounting is presented at each year's Annual General Meeting.

### Cost share options

Members of Tazopia with dues paid for 2017 will have one week advance opportunity to sign up with their NuMen. The Signup web page will allow you to renew or to apply for membership if you have attended two past retreats.

**NuMen** \$100 up to 10 at this rate. Men who have never attended MenTaz are called NuMen. All NuMen must declare an attending TazMan as their Advocate as to provide ongoing support before and during the event.

**First Wave:** \$200, up to 15 at this rate, rate expires when fully subscribed.

**Second Wave:** \$250, to 10 at this level, expires when fully subscribed.

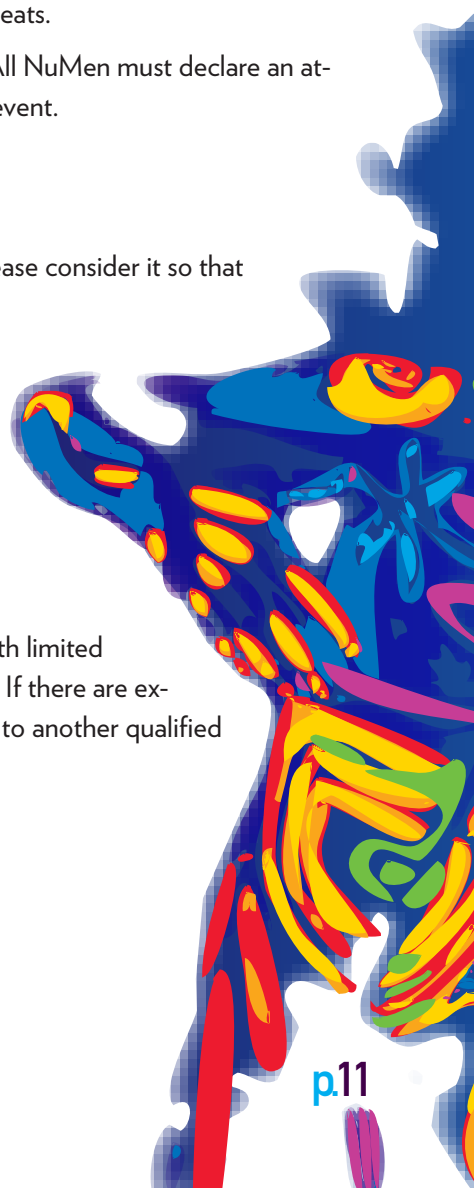
**Last wave:** \$300 up to 5 only at this rate, available until 20 May. If you can afford this level, please consider it so that others with less funds can also attend.

**Gifting:** When signing up, please consider sponsoring someone else in full, or donating some funds to support those who are more financially challenged than you are.

**Sponsorship:** You may register for sponsorship. Sponsorships will be available based on funds gifted by others and on registration time stamp.

### Refunds

Except for unfunded sponsorship requests, refunds are not possible to manage a small event with limited registration. You must be willing to make a conscious commitment to attend without exception. If there are extraordinary circumstances that force you to cancel, you may offer and transfer your registration to another qualified participant for free or at cost without personal profit.



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## Arrival and Departure

You may choose to arrive as early as Tuesday 23 May noon for setup by contributing basic \$5/day for utility and wear/tear costs only. Be prepared to prepare your own meals before catered Friday breakfast. The main house and cabin will have limited access during the early arrival period.

- **Arrival:** You agree to arrive *no later* than 9PM Thursday 25 May 2017.
- **During:** You agree to contribute your time to managing shared chores during the event.
- **Departure:** You agree to stay through cleanup and last Circle Sunday noon, May 28, 2017.

## Waiver

A waiver is important to protect each other from financial stress due to unfortunate incidents or situations. You will be given an opportunity to read the Waiver before registration. You must agree to the Waiver to attend.

## Privacy

By signing up, you agree to receive email communication from Tazopia Projects Society until you revoke permission. Your email address may be visible to other event registrants to facilitate event planning and community building. We respect your privacy. If you have any concerns about compliance with Canadian Privacy Law, please write the Secretary of Tazopia Projects Society.

Photos at the event are prohibited, except for clearly marked spaces where consent is given. The photographer agrees to provide original digital copies of any photos taken within 30 days after the event and agrees to provide Tazopia Projects Society with all rights to publish in low resolution form on the internet and to use images on products for promotional purposes. Tazopia agrees to acknowledge the photographer on any use if advised in writing on submission.

## Registration

- The first step of registration asks a few questions about past attendance or advocacy, Chief options, food constraints, advocacy, event polices, waiver, arrival date and payment method.

You are not registered to attend until your registration form is submitted.

[Click here to sign up](#) and pay.

If you prefer to pay cash or by cheque, please contact the [Registrar](#). Registration by mail will be based on date received, not date posted.

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MenTaz is produced by  
Tazopia Projects Society

