

North House Folk School
June 2012
Concept: Instructor Retreat

In the spring of 2011, North House hosted what affectionately became known as the “Yurt Kabal.” Led by Mark Hansen, nearly a dozen familiar faces, new instructors and yurt experts gathered for six days to focus on yurts. Their goals were to construct a yurt, hand-off the yurt building class to a new group of instructors, and break down the steps involved in making this a successful and well-planned course for North House. Along the way, they discussed the 500 things needed in a home, other simple shelters & furniture, viewed relevant films, and enjoyed some wonderful camaraderie. In short, a good time was had by all. This got us thinking – not only was the Kabal fun, but we think it can serve as a model for an Instructor Retreat. Our hope is that a retreat would create a forum for instructors to gather and share, and would strengthen the fabric of hands-on learning and folk education that is our mission.

Goals

- build instructor community
- nurture folk education traditions
- expand the teaching skills of new instructors
- share teaching secrets & successes
- strengthen the culture & traditions of North House

We envision this happening during the annual “down-time,” when other students are not on campus, allowing the staff, instructors and board time & space to interact in ways not possible during special events or regular “daily life” on campus.

Proposed Schedule

Thursday

Instructor-Only Coursework kicks off! 3-5 courses one to two days in length, limited to 6-8 students per course. Try something entirely new. No tuition; materials fee only.

9 am: Welcome! 2 day courses kick off

6 pm: Potluck Dinner & Film Night

Friday

9 am: 2 day courses continue, 1 day courses begin

5 pm: Official Retreat Kick-Off

North House Update with Greg & Lou Pignolet, Board President

6 pm: Chili & Beer off campus somewhere

Roots of Folk Learning Presentation w/ _____

Saturday AM:

9 am: “Secrets of the Classroom” Roundtable Discussion w/ _____

11 am: “Department Meetings” by theme

-- discuss needed resources

-- identify & discuss potential new instructors/coursework

--generally network with each other

Saturday Afternoon:

Embracing Cook County/Choose Your Own Adventure

--skiing/hiking (depending on season)

--field trip to the National Monument, Hedstrom's Mill, various art studios, local historical society, etc.

--on campus service project (to be determined)

--open studio

Saturday Evening

Pizza Bake!

Presentations from Instructors about their work

Sunday:

9 am: Retreat Closing & Goodbyes

Cinnamon Rolls for the Road!

****Feedback Requested: 3 Questions****

1) Is this a good idea/are you tempted to participate?

a) February or April? Another month?

b) How long? Is the above schedule too short, too long or just about right?

c) What components matter most? What is missing from the above schedule?

2) What resources would you need to participate?

a) Lodging: Given our limited resources on campus, we would hope to find inexpensive lodging options through our business sponsors. Other ideas?

b) Travel Stipend: We would hope to make a small stipend available by request on an as-needed basis. Would this help?

c) Other resources?

3) Would you be willing to be involved (teach a lead-in session, present on your work, or share in another way?