

Eagle Bend MN Convention Letter

Aug 23
8/21/2023

Dear Friends,

This is Bob and Viv Hansen, owners of the Eagle Bend, Minnesota convention grounds. We feel it is imperative for us to convey some messages prior to our conventions coming up in October of this year. This will be a longer convention letter than you've been seeing because we want to clarify some points and help you understand our thoughts and motives. We have not wavered from our intentions of having a convention this year because we believe we have been moved by the Lord to do so. We have loved hosting conventions here in the past and we are looking forward to seeing you all coming to enjoy some restful and peaceful days.

That brings up the issues that we are facing in our fellowship. The victims and the survivors of child sex abuse or sexual abuse are our number one concern. Some have inferred that by having convention that we are insensitive and uncaring towards the victims of child sex abuse, and/or sexual abuse. That is totally untrue! We are so, so sorry for what these precious souls have had to endure through physical and mental anguish and it tears our hearts apart just to think of all they've had to suffer because of these wicked deeds done to them. We hope and pray that these victims will get comfort for their soul and hearts, the healing that is needed, and the love and care and respect they deserve. We will always listen to and believe the victims! We will never side with the predator and since we bought this place in 2000, our mission has been to provide a safe place for people to come and worship freely and have sweet fellowship. Over these 23 years, this has involved prohibiting certain individuals and removing certain individuals from this convention place, and we have never failed to do that IF we knew about a predator. As we have all learned, predators can be unknown to many, many people because of their deceptive grooming abilities and behaviors. While we believe that the fellowship and the ministry are made up of almost all or nearly all people with good hearts and righteous motives, we understand that there could be someone who could be amongst us who is a predator. Therefore, as we will explain a little bit later, we have put into place some safety protocols that we believe will help us to provide a safer place for people.

Another subject that we want to cover is the short staff that we have of workers. We feel very sorry for those workers and understand that they have had to endure great mental and physical stress through these times. So we know that we will need many good volunteers to step up to help us all, to make this a doable and spiritually profitable convention for everyone. Our health has failed some and we are not as able as we once were but we will do what we can.

Now for the safety protocols. We have decided that there can be NO walking path as provided in the past, north of the grounds. There is just too much area out there that is not supervised or cannot be observed by anyone and we decided we will take away that

risk for our friends. You can walk up and down our long driveway and walk on the gravel road and for the most part, should be safe doing so but please observe the traffic and move well over to the side of the road when traffic approaches.

Secondly, while we have not been actively posting on social media, we have been actively reading and listening to your concerns on social media. One of the parent's concerns has been of their children entering a community bathroom when they couldn't be there with them because of difference of gender or other responsibilities, like taking care of their other children. So what we have decided would reduce or eliminate that concern is that we will have clean portable toilets positioned all through the grounds in well lit areas and especially close to the meeting shed so children can go out to these portable toilets and come back into meeting quickly.

Thirdly, there will be security cameras positioned throughout the grounds. Of course, they won't be installed in private settings or sleeping areas or bathrooms because of privacy issues. They are installed in common spaces because we will be recording all movement. We don't know the entire value of these cameras, but we do believe that it can be a deterrent if there are some evil deeds being considered and if we need to go back and review some activities.

The fourth concern is making sure that the visitors that we have coming are safe. While we will not know most of these people, we believe they are coming with good hearts and righteous motives. But, again, because predators can be so deceptive, we know of credible third party professional sources that are available for us to search out these people's backgrounds. And at any time, if we are informed that we have a visitor with allegations of sexual abuse or unacceptable behavior coming here, or is here, we will take immediate and appropriate actions to prohibit or remove that person.

Our zero tolerance policy is very strict. It always has been, and it always will be, as long as we are owners of these grounds. Our definition of zero tolerance is that there will be no accused, alleged, or convicted predator or individual allowed on these grounds, IF we know who they are. We will always be on the side of the victims or survivors or potential victims. If there is a false accusation against a person and later, has been declared not guilty by law enforcement and/or other credible sources, we will reconsider our previous decision.

Our fifth concern is about those who have been enablers to these criminal and evil deeds. On one hand, though, we want to be very careful and thoughtful about accusing somebody who may be in a God given place of authority of something that they are not guilty of doing. We may not have firsthand, or even second hand knowledge of those people, and what they have done. However, if we do have adequate proof that any person/persons have been involved in those activities, we will prohibit them from being here.

Lastly, and most importantly, if anyone sees any suspicious behaviors or criminal behavior, please contact 911 immediately. We would want you to contact us as soon as possible. Our phone number will be posted around the grounds. We will be there as soon as

possible to assess the situation and take appropriate actions. If you are hesitant to call 911, please feel free to call us and we will be with you as soon as possible to discuss the situation with you.

Another thing we would like to address is young parents who have children. We hope with all our hearts that you will feel free to come to the convention because of the safety and refuge provided here. However, we respect your choice whatever you choose. We had young children once ourselves, and we understand the challenges of keeping young and energetic youngsters under control, and under your supervision constantly. We have a large convention grounds here and we should have plenty of open area for young children to play and we encourage that the grounds would be used accordingly. There is one restriction that we will have to place this year on children. In the past, they have enjoyed playing in the woods northeast of the convention grounds and we will have to prohibit children from being in those areas. The reason for this is because the children are too far away from the main part of the grounds, that area is unsupervised and can't be seen easily by observers. However, the woods behind the campers has always been a delightful place for children to play, and that can be easily seen by others and observed so that should be a safe place for children to play also. We want the youngsters to enjoy convention as much as we did growing up. We really appreciate you loving and caring parents who we know will do your best at knowing where your children are and thank you for your diligence in that endeavor.

We are in uncharted waters. As far as this fellowship is concerned, because what has been allowed to happen, the evil minds, and evil hearts of people, have created great damage to this fellowship. We are very saddened by it all because of the mistrust, the lack of trust, and just unsure of where to turn at times. We want you to know, and believe, that none of the above was written with the spirit of arrogance or pride. For months now, we have been tearfully and prayerfully, pleading with the Lord for His guidance. So we humbly want you to know, that we have the same, if not more love and respect for the humble and good hearts of this fellowship. Thank you for your consideration and welcome to convention!

Sincerely,

Bob and Viv Hansen