

# Out & About with Lori Sunflower

Fondest memories of the Crestone Music Festival?



## Patte Smith

I've been doing backstage food the last few years, which has given me a unique access to headliners. One of my favorite years was 2014 when Charles Neville and Ruthie Foster were both headlining. Ruthie's got the most amazing voice. She brought her whole family, including children. They were incredible, like taking care of my own friends/family. And Charles Neville would seek me out to tell me stories. I'd lived in NYC for a while and knew a few places he'd performed and famous people he'd played with. He was warm, friendly, unique and eclectic, very different than I'd anticipated. He'd go, "Hey, kid!" when he came in, even though I'm not really a kid, but he is old enough to be my dad!

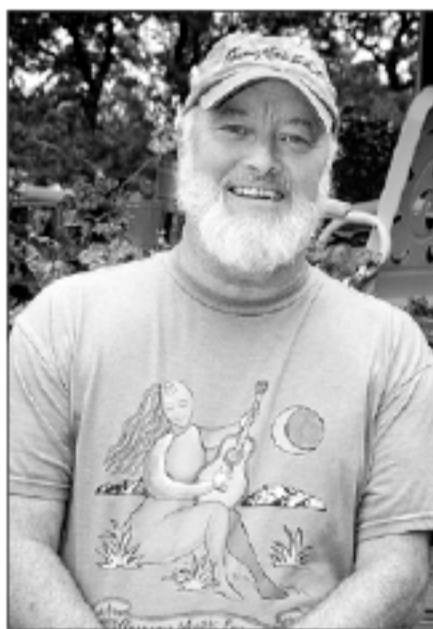
Eli, Dale and I have been involved since the very first year, 1999. Crestone is this unique place. It's a family, we're all connected, and CMF is a bonding event that brings this entire community together—a culmination of summer every year. I hope it continues and we can come back and do it as well as we have in the past. Dale and I support the festival through automatic withdrawal monthly contributions, and I encourage others to do this. Even \$5-\$10/month makes a huge difference!



## Eli Dokson

I have many great memories of the Crestone Music Festival, and I've been lucky enough to play

at several of them. My fondest memory is from 2015 when Robben Ford, a personal musical hero of mine for many years, was the Saturday night headliner. He arrived early because he has close personal friends here, who I happen to also know, so I met him Friday night, which was a thrill. Saturday, I was doing a set of acoustic originals with 2 Weeks in Fiji. Robben showed up and graciously agreed to sit in on 5 songs with us, a total surprise. It was an incredible highlight having a musician of his caliber playing our originals. He made us sound really great, too! He's such a good player. As if that wasn't enough, during his set that night, again, totally by surprise, he called me up onstage to do a song with him and his band. Afterwards, I hung out with him backstage and he told me cool stories about my favorite songs he wrote. Besides being a great memory of the CMF, it's a musical memory in my life I will never forget.



## Dale Smith

Well, I have a lot of memories and most come from letting the festival use my drums, which has always been a connection to other musicians. My favorite memory is 2001. Ritchie Havens did an incredible show Saturday night. I met him right after the show, and he remembered me Sunday and was so friendly. Being from New York, he asked me to take him on a tour. "C'mon! Show me all the people you know and all the vendors and their wares." He was friendly with everybody, so interested in Crestone and the people! Eli and I got a picture with him, which I still treasure. And meeting famous drummers over the years, I live for it actually! Being there every year and knowing it's gonna be awesome because music's what I live for and I love performances. John Lee Hooker, Jr. played on a Sunday when people are usually lower energy, but he did such a phenomenal job. I'll never forget how the crowd responded. Everybody was up front crushing each other. He was involving everybody! Grabbing hands, running all over the place—it was electric!



## Robin Blankenship

I wasn't thrilled about the festival when Deb Morley said she wanted to start one in town. I thought, "Oh, man! Here we go exploding and becoming unlivable, unaffordable." That didn't happen, and over the years, I embraced it. My favorite performer was Johnnie Lee Hooker, Jr. They rocked the place to pieces! My favorite kid memory was Claire Dessain walking up to the box office with a fish in a glass bowl, "Can you babysit my fish while I'm in the festival?" My favorite song was Ritchie Havens singing about the 12 Signs of the Zodiac repeating only the lyrics "I Know" twenty times or so for each sign, in a way you felt he really GOT what each sign was about... until he got to people's personal signs! Then you could hear people, "Oh... Well, that's one person's interpretation!" It was so funny; so Crestone! My favorite memory managing the box office was early Saturday evening, we had this awesome crew, including Beth Quist and Vesper Gers' brother-in-law, Joel, both awesome performers. We had instruments, playing these crazy, silly songs, having a blast. People arrived to pay for the headliner, but started gathering, listening, singing along, and drumming on the counters. We had 15 minutes of "The Box Office Show"! My fondest visual recollection is a beautiful sunset and concurrent rainbow over the mountains. John and Laura Syperda were dancing in these elegant, old fashioned, stark white outfits, across the deep, green grass with a dark, north sky backdrop. Rainbow and sunset light were reflecting off their clothes. Just, fantastic.



## Jonathan Neuhaus-Rose

I've been going to the music festival my whole life, since I first got here as a baby. My fondest memories are always when I first arrive there and I'm so excited to

get in, run around and meet up with friends. It's just really fun, and feels like a safe place. I've done the pie eating contest a couple times just to see if I could win anything. I loved the bungee jumping thing, but I never managed to do a back flip on it, sadly. Always tried though! The last couple years, I helped my dad set up all the technical equipment and wi-fi, which was hard, since we had to run it through trees and stuff. Sometimes the credit card machines wouldn't work, and I helped my dad fix it. It's a bummer it's only going to be 2 days this year. I always liked Sundays when everything's getting packed up and all the local kids were there and there were all these empty tents, leaving more space to run around and more of just community instead of all the visitors. If it's going to be just 2 days this year, we may not get that chance on Saturday.



## Robin Rosenberg

I started volunteering with the music festival in its second year, and was volunteer coordinator from 2001 until 2013. I ran the box office for 10 years and was the Assistant Director for 3. The best part for me was organizing volunteers and vendors who came together to create community and put on a remarkable event. I loved most of the music. I didn't always get to hear it. Donnie Richmond and the Riffers were my favorite. Seeing my son, Abe Rosenberg, play in Sweet Radish was a highlight for me. Also, our band, with Richard Reed, Ed Rosenberg, Jim Pratt, Abe and I playing Spirit Mountain String Band on a Sunday; that was really exciting. One of my favorite musical moments is when Michelle Shocked played and a computer glitch caused the fireworks to go off early and come in low. Being in the crowd was a spectacular experience. No one knew anything was wrong, but the fireworks were almost touching people. Michelle Shocked spontaneously started playing along with the fireworks! Every year my favorite moment was Sunday afternoon when many of the non-locals had departed. I would look around and see my community playing together. It didn't matter if the week before we had been arguing about the POA, the school or politics. In that moment, on a beautiful Sunday afternoon in August, everyone came together to celebrate.

If you have feedback or suggestions for future topics, please email [peacelovilove@gmail.com](mailto:peacelovilove@gmail.com). In addition to being the Staff Photographer for The Crestone Eagle since 2012, Lori Nagel is a freelance photographer, graphic designer & web designer. [www.sunflowerstudios.us.com](http://www.sunflowerstudios.us.com).