

**From Paula Guerrein
September 5, 2022**

Some memories of mine...for me, it was a party to remember.
I don't have my notes with me at present, but here goes on some thoughts.

The Billy Joe Tatum affair - December 13, 1980

I remember thinking that I was going to the party looking like a ragamuffin and smelling a bit rank from hiking. No matter, we were all in the same boat.

Everyone was excited. I was 21, on Christmas break on my last semester before college graduation. Mom and I get there and the music was playing, people were dancing and clogging to a bluegrass band with a mean fiddle player and great bass cutting loose.

There were people everywhere, laughing, talking, drinking, eating and Billy Joe was at her finest. She knew everyone. All sorts of people, her neighbors, friends, some journalists, all the hikers, just a houseful of people.

The porch was packed and the cloggers were at it.

And there she was, loving every minute and wanting to meet us all.

Many of us took turns going down the fire pole from her second floor to the kitchen, God that was fun. I wanted one just like it in my future house.

I sipped on that spiked sassafras tea, eyes wide and took it all in. I talked with a lot of interesting people, not sure I danced but I sure felt like it.

And the food was stupendous, lots of it, deliciously decadent and all homemade and foraged from the forest.

Billy Joe had the knowledge of where to find what she needed from Mother Earth. And I tried everything there was to eat.

You see, my mom and dad followed the Adelle Davis way of cooking and eating so I was used to having healthy things that many others wouldn't eat.

I like dandelion leaf in my salads. My dad made elderberry wine. But that Hunter's Pie was something I'd never had... four meats made into a savory pie and crust.

A hearty salad of all sorts of leafy things. Some berry pie.

Who didn't adore Billy Joe's vitality, energy, aura, passion and fun spirit? She knew who she was and owned it, as wild as the woods around her.

I forage now a bit myself, somewhat timidly, without the assuredness and knowledge that she carried within her.

And I fell in love with Arkansas on HikaNation, the trails, trees, people. I still remember seeing stars so bright one night when I left the tent to pee that I could have collected them in a basket.

Tim Ernst really showed us the best of Arkansas, and still does through his photography. I believe he arranged for this unusual reception for HikaNation and I will always be grateful. I did write a story of my visit with HikaNation that was published in *Military Wives* magazine, it's in the stories/journals section of the HikaNation website William has so lovingly documented for hiking history.

Thank you too for your interest in Billy Joe and documenting such an influential woman.

Paula Guerrein
(Marce Guerrein's daughter)