

WolfStone Ranch Newsletter

Issue #1

2010 through 2014

Saving one dog (or even 200) will not change the world...

Here I sit, on a grey, rainy Christmas Eve... Most of my dogs are still snuggled in their basement crates, although a few have chosen to be out in their kennels for the fresh air... I've just finished morning chores... and listening to NPR's The Diane Rehm Show, in which she was interviewing Peter and Paul, who are celebrating their 50th anniversary (*although Mary has died*)... Like Pete Seeger (*one of my heroes*), this trio had truly Made A Difference with their music!

And I? I've tried so hard, I've struggled my whole life to Make A Difference... as a singer, then as a songwriter and activist... and now as an animal advocate and activist. And while I've enjoyed some real adventures in my life, I don't feel like I've really made much of a difference... at least not yet...

On the other hand... longtime dear friend "Cowgirl" Christina of Wisconsin (*who adopted my Coco this year, 2014!*) for Christmas just gave me a table ornament that reads, "Saving one dog will not change the world, but surely for that one dog, the world will change forever." And in the last five years, I have saved the lives of over 200 dogs and cats. Certainly, there is success in that! And yet...

And yet I have felt that my Mission is so much larger than that! In the way that Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. ... and yes, even Pete Seeger and Peter, Paul and Mary... positively changed the worlds in which they lived and worked... that is what I still long to do!

And that is what I have struggled so mightily to do. I have truly given all that I have and all that I am to my Mission to reduce the suffering and save the lives of animals... and to try to create a place and a space in which the attitudes and actions of people can be changed to be more compassionate toward Mother Earth and all her "children"... all the living beings whom God has created.

I came to this Mission with nothing but my passion and a sense of having been Called by the Sacred (*by God, by the Universe*). When I moved back to Missouri in late 2006, I had no money, no job... but soon I had started my own housecleaning business while simultaneously responding to the animal suffering I saw all around me. And soon God was blessing me with miracles, large and small, giving me the resources I needed to address each animal I rescued.

Then in 2010 I joined the Board of Directors at Farmington Pet Adoption Center, where I learned (*in my year on the board*) a whole lot about the world of animal-rescue! Also that year I was forced (*by rescuing one too many animals for the municipal code*) to move out of my town rental... which is when God blessed me with the charming-but-neglected five-acre property with tiny cottage and miniature barn that I named **WolfStone Ranch**! And during 2011 and 2012 I rescued nearly 200 animals, almost all of whom found wonderful homes through the premier no-kill shelter in St. Louis, Five Acres Animal Shelter, with whom **WolfStone Ranch** collaborated. The remaining animals (*and a handful of new ones rescued in 2014*) still reside here at **WolfStone Ranch**, several still awaiting rehab of one kind or another.

During 2011, I was also spending more and more time with my seriously ill father, until he passed away in October of that year. And in 2012, I inherited over a quarter of a million dollars... all of which was invested into **WolfStone Ranch**. While working and rescuing all those animals in dire need (*most in life-and-death situations*), I was also incredibly busy in 2012 and 2013 spending all that money... So many repairs to broken-down and outdated infrastructure! So much development of the place needed to turn it into an animal rescue facility!

Progress during 2013 included becoming a state-licensed animal-care facility and applying for tax-exempt status with the IRS... and building a website in which to lay out my Mission Statement and grand vision for **WolfStone Ranch**. And perhaps most important of all that year, I finally received the answer to my many prayers... an answer to the question, "What business should I start to help support my animal-rescue Mission?" On November 12th... on 11/12/13... I dreamed of a spiritual retreat for pets (and their people) (*also outlined in **WolfStone Ranch's website***)! What an inspired idea... I thought I'd been spiritually reborn!! But...

But I was nearly out of money and I'd quit my housecleaning business back in the spring of 2012, in order to devote myself full-time to developing **WolfStone Ranch** ... so I wondered how God was going to quickly throw this new business together... that is, with what miracles was God going to suddenly bless **WolfStone Ranch**???

Naiveté? Denial? No... at the time, I simply couldn't imagine any other way forward! I was not only broke but also utterly exhausted from working as hard as I could and as fast as I could to get **WolfStone Ranch** off the ground before I ran out of Papa's money! And yet I'd been unable to come up with any plausible ideas for a back-up "Plan B" to sustain my family of (*at the time*) 36 animals!! Not that I hadn't wracked my brain day and night the previous couple of years to come up with both Plan A as well as Plan B...

Sometimes it looks like things are falling apart...
When they're really falling into place.

Well, at least 2014 began on a promising note... with word from the IRS that **WolfStone Ranch** had been granted tax-exempt status. Not only was **WolfStone Ranch** licensed, it was now officially a 501(c)(3)... hooray!

But nothing came of my initial attempts to reach out to the public to seek business partners and angel investors to get involved in helping to develop **WolfStone Ranch** as a spiritual retreat for pets (and their people).

Then, the first miracle of 2014 came, in the form of Best Friends Animal Society. Long story short, they agreed to take most of my already-adoptable dogs and cats...which meant that they took 4 dogs and 10 cats!! I also adopted out 2 dogs and 2 cats myself. Second miracle was (*and still is*) Bill Splitter, a Volunteer Extraordinaire for Best Friends for the past ten years, who transported (*in two separate trips, at his own expense!*) these 14 lucky animals to Best Friends in Utah... where all 4 dogs and 4 of the 10 cats have already been adopted!

Moreover, Bill was so impressed with **WolfStone Ranch**, calling it a “little Best Friends” because of the high quality in which I have designed and developed the facility, that he has become a devoted volunteer down here, too. Bill makes the 90-minute drive from St. Louis, where he lives, down to Farmington at least a couple of times a week to help out. What passion and commitment!!

Then I went back to housecleaning. But I didn't find enough clients, so I went seeking other employment and, third miracle of 2014, I found a unique job at Presbyterian Children's Home. I am officially part of the “Rec Team”, short for “recreation”, but my job is to provide music lessons tinged with spiritual inspiration! I am going to be able to start a Drumming Circle and a Prayer Song Circle with the kids there! To me it clearly feels like God is saying “I want you to do all these things for both the kids at the Home but also for the fur babies at **WolfStone Ranch**.”

A fourth miracle came in the form of Laura Weston, who used to work at Farmington Pet Adoption Center. In my opinion, Laura was always the most competent, most committed, most innately talented (*at animal care and rescue*) of all the wonderful people working down there. Well, Laura began doing TNR... Trap, Neuter, Return (*or Relocate*)... of feral cats under **WolfStone Ranch's** 501(c)(3), which means that our superb veterinarian, Jennifer Comte DVM, is giving us incredible deals (*including, when possible, donation of suture materials, etc.*) on spaying, castrating and vaccinating “community cats”. Laura is trapping not only in Farmington, but also throughout the Mineral Area... in our efforts to reduce the population of unwanted cats in our local communities.

Though 2014 was more about moving animals out of **WolfStone Ranch**, I did still take in 2 dogs and 2 cats this year. All 4 animals would have died had I not rescued them. And all 4 animals are very sweet, friendly... and highly adoptable! **Annabelle**, **Jada** and **Shadoe** are ready to go, whenever someone falls in love with them. **Duke** is still “recovering” from

heartworms. Although he has finished his treatment, he must be crated 24/7 (*and slowly walked only on a leash several times a day*) until mid-May... otherwise, he could die from “worm clots”. So he’ll remain here until he’s totally heartworm-free... and it’s finally safe for him to run and play like the fun-loving, high-energy Lab “pup” he is!

And a fifth miracle has just recently come to fruition... This past September I had approached Mineral Area College about setting up an internship... and we’ve just now engaged a fantastic student, Brittany Filippi, who will be helping out for 6 hours a week this coming semester! Brittany wants to be a Missouri State Park Ranger, so she’s going for a double major in Agri-Biz and Law Enforcement. She’s very responsible and dependable, as well as professional in her attitude and work habits. She’s got innate talent with animals... and she’s delightful!

And a final miracle for the year... regarding the old Boxer who, incidentally, was the reason I had to move out of Farmington! **Phoenix** was only 8 years old when I rescued him back in 2010. I couldn’t place him because he was old and because he had a “bum” leg. The DVM said he’d probably been hit by a car years ago, which is why his leg was broken in several places. He looked crippled, but he wasn’t in pain and it didn’t slow him down one bit! But now, he’s got serious arthritis and his muscles are growing weak. Other than that, however, he seems to be in excellent health. So I asked Laura about doggie wheelchairs, because she has a dog who uses one... And long story short, Laura and Lisa found a woman in Florida who has donated a cart that’s the perfect size for **Phoenix**! Lisa’s helping me to fit the harness to this sweet old boy and teaching me the tricks of getting him comfortable with using it. So when **Phoenix** can no longer get around on his own, I don’t have to “put him down” but instead, will be able to strap him in and let him “do his business” and enjoy tooling around the front yard! Talk about a Merry Christmas!!

Yes, it’s been a challenging Year of Transition, but challenge builds Karraker (*I mean “character”*), right? But now I see such incredible potential for more miracles of Progress and Success in 2015! And although I was questioning it at the beginning of 2014, I now feel certain that I am still on the right path... the Native Americans call it “**Walking In Beauty**”, meaning when heaven and earth are in harmony. **WolfStone Ranch** has been blessed with so many gifts... including the wonderful and miraculous generosity of **WolfStone Ranch’s** very special and magnanimous donors!! And I believe I myself still have much to give and much to do to bring healing into the world through **WolfStone Ranch** ... for people as well as other animals (*because people are animals, too, you know*)!

The spiritual retreat for pets (and their people) that I dreamed about (*now over a year ago*) is not going to happen overnight... duh! But little by little, more and more will fall into place. Best Friends Animal Society just celebrated their 30th anniversary this year... and look how big and successful they are today!

Thirty years from now I will probably not be here to see how far **WolfStone Ranch** has come... but I hope and pray that God will allow me, in whatever time left to me, to build a dynamic community of kindred spirits with bright minds, compassionate hearts, strong

bodies and competent hands... Passionate lovers of animals and justice... who will continue the Mission I have begun to save animal lives... and to lead the Rural Midwest culture in becoming a gentler, kinder one, for all living beings!

The sun just came out, so I must run... the dogs will all want to get out of their snug crates in the basement and frolic in the play yard on this joyous morning! May 2015 overflow with Health and Happiness, Love and Laughter... and much Peace and Joy for all of you, my dear and precious friends... as well as for **WolfStone Ranch!**

Amen and So Be It

Jessica Karraker