
WolfStone Ranch... Time for a “Sea Change”

Spring & Summer 2017 Newsletter

Here it is, mid-July, and I still haven't sent out even an Accomplishment List (*let alone a full-fledged Newsletter*) for May or June. The reason I am constantly behind schedule is because I simply have too many animals for one person to take care of... especially on top of working to support myself. Yes, you've heard this often, but are you aware that I am not the only rescue operation here in Missouri with the chronic problem of not being able to find or retain help? On the contrary, my state inspector recently assured me that EVERY rescue she inspects is in the same predicament. But I am thrilled to report that I honestly believe this situation is on the verge of changing for **WolfStone Ranch** in the not-too-distant future...

So here is May, in a nutshell... Several veterinary appointments for different animals for unrelated issues... 2 more times taking the barn cats to the basement overnight due to severe weather... an onerous 24-hour power outage due to impressive straight-line winds (*trees down all over the region*)... **Koty** started his 6-week AKC Canine Good Citizenship obedience class in Pevely (*including two practice sessions at home every day*)... one of five kittens (**Romeo**) got adopted... HOORAY! And I made a customized Community Building Experience (“CBE”) presentation at Mineral Area College (“MAC”) just to “my girls”... 3 of 4 bright, talented, hardworking young women who have blessed **WolfStone Ranch** with their involvement at different times over the years (*the 4th was studying for a nursing exam*).

And here is June... another month with an unusually high number of trips to the DVM (*partially due to the kittens requiring vaccinations every 3 weeks*)... continuing **Koty's** weekly obedience classes (*an hour's drive away*) and at-home training sessions... 2 trips to the St. Louis area for renovating and remounting my camper shell onto my truck... 2 more trips to St. Louis, one to transport the 4 kittens to St. Charles County Pet Adoption Center, and another to bring them home... with a consequent outbreak of an unidentified feline virus spreading throughout my cat population, one of the biggest crises I've faced in 7 years of rescue experience at **WolfStone Ranch**...

There, all caught up... that was easy! 😊 But seriously, I hope to eventually complete detailed and interesting newsletters going back to September 2016 through

the present... because I intend to include them in my website (*through the News & Events page*) as a way of keeping my website up-to-date.

A Profound Transformation

As you all know, I've been talking for literally years about producing a Community Building Experience... You also know that I recently finished composing a group presentation package, so that I could start "selling" the local movers and shakers on participating in such an event... as a way of networking to build **WolfStone Ranch's** human community (*as well as benefitting the broader community of Farmington and the region*)... and you know that I actually got out there and started talking to people. What you haven't known is that **the whole process has led me to some huge insights that have inspired a profound transformation in my vision and execution of WolfStone Ranch's mission.**

Where to start? What to say? What to leave out? I don't think I need to take up too much of your time walking you through very many of the things that have happened or that people have said to me, or that I have heard on the radio or read somewhere... suffice it to say that the Universe has worked through a myriad of creative ways to lead me to this critical and, I believe, life-changing point. But here it is, in what I hope is a neat little nutshell!

I now finally **grok** (*google it*) two things... First, that I haven't been totally and authentically "me" in the development or presentation of my vision of **WolfStone Ranch**... I've "watered it down", so as not to offend anyone, in what I now see was a vain attempt to appeal to a wider audience. And second, that consequently (*and unconsciously*) I've been approaching my vision of a "spiritual retreat for pets and their people" in a corporate, even capitalist, manner... instead of an authentically and organically spiritual way! In other words...

Like my bumper sticker reads... **"There is no way to peace, peace IS the way."** One's means must be consistent with one's end. But how can one's spiritual retreat be truly spiritual if one first envisions it as a business (*albeit nonprofit*)? One must start an authentic spiritual retreat in a spiritual manner... duh! At least I now see that THIS "one" (*meaning ME!*) must do it that way.

A SPIRITUALLY-BASED COMMUNITY

Starting immediately, **WolfStone Ranch** is going to become overtly and shamelessly spiritually based. **"Building a COMMUNITY around the shared ethos of compassionate treatment of all animals"**. Sound familiar? That's because that phrase has been one of our three mission statements (*in official founding*

documentation and all over our website) from the very beginning! However, I've always listed it last... first, "canine and feline rescue" and second, "creating an environment of healing for all living beings". But now I grok that, first and foremost, the very foundation of **WolfStone Ranch** must be THE COMMUNITY.

And THIS community must be unabashedly and joyfully spiritually based. Mind you, NOT religious, although the religious are certainly welcome... But so are those who consider themselves to be agnostics or atheists, or humanists or secularists... really, anyone who shares my commitment to the principles of (*as the Christians say*) **The Golden Rule**... that is, the commonsense ethics of reciprocity, "**do unto others as you would have them do unto you**"... but applied to ALL living creatures. And as you already know, my personal brand of spirituality embraces all religions that are based on love and compassion... Remember the poster I shared with you in a **Weekly WolfStone?** "**Buddha was not a Buddhist. Jesus was not a Christian. Muhammad was not a Muslim. They were Teachers who taught Love. LOVE was their Religion.**"

Moreover, being spiritually based means that I try to live my life through my Sacred Self... that is, to approach life wisely... or as Pope Francis says, "**Wisdom is precisely this: to see the world, to see situations, circumstances problems, everything through God's eyes.**"

Therefore, our **WolfStone Ranch** community will be set up to operate sort of like a monastery... like the one in "**The Rabbi's Gift**"! You remember... the myth that Scott Peck used as the prologue to his book "**The Different Drum: A Spiritual Journey Toward Self-Acceptance, True Belonging, and New Hope for the World: Community Making and Peace**"... the book in which he discussed the organization he founded (*The Foundation for Community Encouragement*) that presents the Community-Building Experiences, one of which I am now planning to be the very first project of our new spiritually-based, activist-oriented community. Yes, I said activist...

AN ACTIVIST-DRIVEN COMMUNITY

WolfStone Ranch is also going to become an activist community, enthusiastically working for social-, eco- and animal-justice. Because that's what God... or the Universe... or Love (*or whatever you wanna call it*) has been compelling me all along to do through **WolfStone Ranch**. And because THAT's what I have come to believe is precisely what's going to excite people and motivate them to get involved in **WolfStone Ranch!** AND because that's what's desperately needed, if we're ever going to make any real progress toward ending the needless suffering and untimely death of animals in Missouri!

You see, I have come to believe that one of the reasons people burn out so quickly on volunteering or getting seriously involved in animal rescue is because, at a

subconscious level, they can sense that this is a losing battle... that if we don't do more than just respond to each and every suffering animal's crisis, we're going to just fall further and further behind in the race to save them all... it's utterly demoralizing. No, what we must do is **CHANGE THE CULTURE**. Like Gandhi did in India, to oust the British colonialists. Like Martin Luther King Jr. did with our country's civil rights movement. We've got to change the way people think, so that we can change the way they act, so that we can change the policies and procedures... as well as the **CULTURAL NORMS!** ...to address pet overpopulation and other issues relating to compassionate treatment of all animals (*also including livestock and wildlife*). Now, living in a sacred manner means to me that I am required to devote my life to Making A Difference in the world. That's why I started **WolfStone Ranch** in the first place! But there are right ways and there are wrong ways to be an activist. And the hippies protesting the Viet Nam War provided a perfect example of how NOT to do it. As Mother Teresa said, **"I was once asked why I don't participate in anti-war demonstrations. I said that I will never do that, but as soon as you have a pro-peace rally, I'll be there."**

Which is to say, **WolfStone Ranch's** brand of activism will be spiritually based, founded on moral and ethical principles... because that's what The Golden Rule requires. But also because that's really the only practical and effective means to success... Just ask Mahatma Gandhi or Martin Luther King, Jr. Because compromising your principles in your methods of activism leads to your actions backfiring and ultimately failing. It's not just ethically sound, it's commonsense! Therefore, our activist style will be peaceful, nonviolent, and even joyful... because you attract more bees (*and win more converts*) with honey than with vinegar!

One critical *caveat*... **WolfStone Ranch's** activism will ostensibly NOT be political... again, following the lead of Gandhi and King. Instead, we will be ISSUE-oriented. Obviously, issues can easily be viewed as lining up with a political party, but deliberately choosing not to be overtly political helps our cause in two ways... first, it keeps our focus on the problems to be resolved, as opposed to which side of the debate we're on... and second, this should help to keep the doors of communication open with other people with opposing views (*by not demonizing or alienating them, and thereby not getting caught up in our own echo chamber*).

A HIPPIE-STYLE COMMUNITY

Yes, **WolfStone Ranch** is going to become a spiritually-based, activist-driven community... a community of Kindred Spirits. But who the heck are my Kindred Spirits? Just who are the people who will want to join such a community? For some strange reason, this has always been a perplexing question for me, especially since the Universe "forced" me to move back to Missouri... as I had left here four decades ago because I had never felt like I belonged here. And yet, once back, I've felt the Universe brought me back both BECAUSE I came from here, but also because I WENT AWAY. Which makes me something of a cultural "mixed breed", no?!

So who are **MY PEOPLE???** Well, first of all, they are **ALL OF YOU!** As unique as you all are, you share a deep and abiding compassion for animals... which has compelled each of you to get involved in supporting the work I've been doing, rescuing animals for the last seven years. But the Universe has brought each of us together through a variety of means... means that have frankly not yielded very many of you. So how do I go about identifying a **GROUP** of people... that I might consider to be my Kindred Spirits, so that I might find more effective methods of reaching out to them?

Well, as a teen I enthusiastically considered myself to be a **HIPPIE**. Google it (*I have!*) Hippies are... countercultural (*they comprise only about 10-15% of their respective generations*), so they're open and accepting of different cultures, races, ethnicities, and sexual orientations/ identities... they are seekers of meaning and value, espousing peace and universal love... they actively oppose violence and war (*the original Hippies were a driving force behind the civil rights and antiwar movements of the 1960's*)... they have compassion for and care deeply about Mother Earth (*the environment and global warming*) and the wellbeing of all animals... so they're into renewable energy, recycling, and sustainable farming... and so much more... Yep, I'd definitely have to say that my Kindred Spirits are Hippies!

Well, get this... three of the many cool things that happened to me this spring were... I suddenly learned there are still Hippies... not just old codgers like me, but Hippies of all ages, even Millennial Hippies! I also learned of a local, annual Woodstock-like festival, called the Cosmic Reunion... Wo, that means there are plenty of Hippies right here in Missouri! And I have even learned that there's a "21st Century Hippies" Facebook page!

LAUNCHING A SPIRITUALLY-BASED, ACTIVIST MOVEMENT

But let me back up for a minute... it has been my dream for 30 years to start a spiritually-based, activist **MUSICAL** ensemble and movement. After having spent a few formative years in Florida singing lead in rock bands, I had moved to Los Angeles where I had then spent a dozen years touring the world with the ensemble of a renowned *avant-garde* composer. While with him, I had commissioned him to write a major work based on my lyrics, which collaboration turned out to be our **wolfMASS**, written to inspire listeners to save Mother Earth and her endangered species. After we split up, I had a full-blown spiritual awakening that led me to start writing and performing my own prayer songs of healing, as well as activist songs for social- and eco-justice. For a few years in Phoenix I had tried to start a spiritually-based musical ensemble, to be called **Crying For A Vision**... to inspire people to get in touch with their Sacred Selves and become spiritually-based activists to help create a kinder, gentler, more compassionate world. When I had failed at my first attempt of that endeavor, I had then moved to Rocky Mountain National Park, to soothe my broken soul... until the Universe sort of forced me to move back to Missouri... where I eventually felt the Sacred call me to start **WolfStone Ranch**... **The point is, I've**

actually spent my whole adult life preparing to do what I'm about to do with this Sea Change in WolfStone Ranch's Mission.

However, when I started WolfStone Ranch, I had no idea it would lead me full circle back to that former Calling! But then, after I had the literal nighttime dream (*you remember... in answer to prayer seeking the idea for a business to start to support our animal rescue work*) to start a spiritual retreat for pets (and their people), it seemed to me that I might be able, one day, to actually revive my old **Crying For A Vision** dream... because to me the two projects seem so related! I mean, I could see using such a musical ensemble to recruit, to raise donations and even to inspire cultural change. Once, that is, that I got WolfStone Ranch up and running... because, I thought, I certainly don't have time to do it now!

But recruiting people to join me any other way simply has not happened... I've just not been able to find people to get involved in WolfStone Ranch as a conventional animal rescue... So it finally dawned on me... as a matter of fact, on the very day that I met with my girls for that special CBE presentation at MAC back in May... that the best (*perhaps the only?!*) way that I'm going to be able to get people involved is to start a spiritually-based, activist movement. That is, I now think that **I have had it all backwards!**

So now that I've profoundly transformed my WolfStone Ranch vision... as outlined above... NOW I can finally build on that newly true and authentic foundation to reach out to the people who will resonate with this much more exciting and enticing mission! You see, I have come to see that it wasn't ever going to happen any other way... That I simply **MUST** find the time and energy to make this Sea Change NOW, if I am ever going to create a lasting organization that will continue the work that I have begun!

CRYING FOR A VISION

But please understand, my vision of a **Crying For A Vision** musical ensemble has also undergone a Sea Change. I no longer see it as a conventional musical ensemble, as defined by our contemporary culture. Instead, I see it much more like the musical expression of a primitive culture's spirituality. Therefore, while actual musicians may get involved in our ensemble, ANYONE who can keep a beat and who isn't tone deaf will be welcome to participate. (*And the musically challenged, will be welcome instead to collaborate by dancing!*) And no performers are to be featured, as soloists or "stars" of some "show". No, what will be featured is THE SPIRITUALLY-BASED, ACTIVIST MESSAGE.

In this utterly egoless and all-inclusive way, our ensemble will be like a contemporary "community" (*open to the public*) drum circle. But unlike a typical "civic" drum

circle, ours will be blatantly and joyfully a SPIRITUAL ensemble. That is, every song we perform will be a PRAYER. The drumming itself will be prayer... the songs will be prayers ... even the dancing will be prayer... Prayers that we create for healing... Prayers that we compose for our social-, eco- and animal-justice issues. Understanding any form of artistic performance as prayer may be foreign to our contemporary Western culture, but NOT to primitive cultures... and if you go back far enough, ALL of us come from primitive cultures! **Crying For A Vision** will revive that ancient practice, for I believe it will be a mystically magical and musically miraculous method of inspiring people to get in touch with the Sacred Within, which in turn I fervently hope will compel them into enthusiastic and compassionate action on behalf of some of the world's most underprivileged and vulnerable among us.

Secondly, our prayer songs will be elegantly simple and hypnotically repetitive... like spoken mantras... Designed to be incredibly easy for everyone in our audiences to be able to join in with us. Sort of like the way "Deadheads" famously sang along with the Grateful Dead... except our interactive magic will come from tapping into the Sacred, not from taking drugs!

Thirdly, I believe this communal approach to performance will create an irresistible and charismatic energy for BUILDING as well as maintaining COMMUNITY... first among the **WolfStone Ranch** "tribe", as well as (*eventually*) through our spiritual retreat for pets (and their people)... and perhaps even beyond, as we may expand our activist outreach throughout Southeastern Missouri or the entire rural Midwest.

OTHER ACTIVIST PROJECTS

Of course, whether or not everyone who is drawn into the new **WolfStone Ranch** community will be interested in performing with **Crying For A Vision**, I trust that some among our new tribe will feel Called to work on such projects as... setting up an inexpensive spay/neuter clinic, setting up a feral-cat Trap/Neuter/Release program, and setting up a humane education program throughout our local school systems. (*Of course, if such programs have already been started by others, we will want to coordinate with them.*)

And now confident that a community as lively and dynamic as ours will be, I also trust that others among us will be enthusiastically Called to help with all kinds of animal care... rescuing, feeding, cleaning, socializing, rehabilitating, training, fostering, etc. Help at long last!

But I also hope that some among us will be drawn to the more traditional (*human*) social-justice issues... first, because any living being who is suffering needs help! But secondly, even if one's Calling is to help NON-human animals, one should care about human issues... because (*just think about it for a moment*) anything that improves the conditions of poverty, addiction, domestic violence (*etc.*) is both directly and indirectly going to help animals... right?!

OVERHAULING OUR WEBSITE

So what's next? Well, once I get this newsletter out to all of you, I will begin to overhaul my website to reflect this sea change of my vision of **WolfStone Ranch**. I will lay it all out, in more detail than I have in this little newsletter... And then ask, "Care (*Enough*) To Join Me?" My goal is to complete the rewrite by Labor Day, which happens to fall on my 64th birthday this year! And then my webmaster will probably need a couple of weeks to finalize the changes I've submitted to him...

STARTING A TARGETED SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

Then the next step will be reaching out through appropriate social media to seek my targeted audience... My clarion call to Hippies of all ages will be... "*Think Globally, But Act Locally... Let's show the world that you don't have to move to the big city or to the coasts (east or west) to lead an exciting and satisfying life, while Making A Real Difference in the world!*" Like the Pied Piper, I'm going to do my best to allure the Hippies who resonate with my vision out of the Missouri woods and hills to Stand Up Together as a COMMUNITY to Change our World!

A COMMUNITY BUILDING EXPERIENCE... Our First Activist Project

If Leading the Way in Cultural Change is one of **WolfStone Ranch's** goals, Leading By Example is the best way to get started. From the moment I read about Scott Peck's Community Building Experiences, I knew I'd struck gold. I instantly grokked that this was a piece of rock on which to build the foundation of **WolfStone Ranch**... because I so desperately want to avoid the kinds of dysfunctions that I've seen disable other nonprofits (*not just rescues*), as well as businesses I've worked for... Or take a look at our country's political system... There's so much dysfunction out there! And I totally believe that our world would be a much healthier place if everyone were to willingly participate in a CBE with an open mind and heart!

But ya gotta practice whacha preach, right? First, one must be willing to change oneself... before one can hope to inspire others to similar change. As Gandhi said, "**You must be the change you wish to see in the world.**" So the very first activist project in which the entire **WolfStone Ranch** tribe will participate, will be the production of a Community Building Experience.

And isn't Changing Oneself the message of "The Rabbi's Gift"? First of all, how can one build a strong, healthy, lasting community unless everyone involved is willing to ask, "Could that other person be the Messiah? Could I be the Messiah?" And as everyone contemplates these questions, they are changed from the inside out... thus creating the kind of community that is literally "attractive". People want to be a part of such an enlightened (*humble, kind and committed*) community, so they come and they stay... and new people continually want to join. And spoiler alert, the obvious answer to these Messiah questions is... EVERYONE has the Messiah Within! I

believe it's people striving to live their lives from within their Sacred Selves, and always recognizing the Sacred within others, that CREATES A SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY.

Similarly, I believe the Community Building Experience is the very best way to START AND SUSTAIN A SOCIAL-JUSTICE MOVEMENT. As you may remember reading in my CBE Group Presentation (*see the handout, "Key to Successful Activism"*) protest marches and rallies can seem fun and exciting, but they often don't lead to accomplishing their intended goals. I feel sure, however, that a community that has bonded through the CBE process is infinitely more likely to succeed in theirs...

Such as changing the rural Midwest culture to becoming much more compassionate in its treatment of all animals... not to mention, their next-door neighbors!

To those who would say this all sounds unrealistic, grandiose or just plain crazy, I say... check out these two TED Talks... (*Their motto, "Ideas Worth Spreading"... TED Talks are influential videos from expert speakers on education, business, science, tech and creativity*)

https://www.ted.com/talks/derek_sivers_how_to_start_a_movement

I'm the First Dancer... And I feel sure that, through the social media campaign I will launch, I will find the real hero of the story, the First Hippie Follower to join the WolfStone Ranch "Tribe"!

https://www.ted.com/talks/seth_godin_on_the_tribes_we_lead

It just takes an ordinary person... someone like me... to care enough to have the courage and commitment to step out and say... "Follow me!"

Namaste

I bow to the Divine in You