



The Ring Lake Carillon

Ring Lake Ranch • Dubois, Wyoming • Fall 2018

An ecumenical retreat center offering "renewal in sacred wilderness."



Survivor in a Wild Place

By Naomi Hoyer

I have been coming to Ring Lake Ranch for most of my life, and I have seen it through many lenses. As a child, it was a sanctuary. The horses, friends, wilderness and deep freedom were a contrast to my suburban life at home. As a teenager, it was my first and most formative job. I counted down the days to my ten weeks of summer work every academic year. The endless hours spent leading rides, in deep conversation

with people, and in the solace of the deeply familiar were rejuvenating in ways that I did not understand at the time. As a young adult, I had the opportunity to serve on the Board of Directors, helping to shape the path of the Ranch into the future. I understood the fragility of the Ranch based on its finances, its reliance on the quality of staff, and volunteers, and its critical importance in our increasingly tumultuous world. I had

the opportunity to start bringing my own children here soon after. Seeing them explore the same trails that I have known for a lifetime, swim in the lakes, and ride, albeit not the same horses, but with the same spirits has given me an even deeper love for the place than I thought possible. Now, I come as a survivor, and my perception has changed again. In August 2017, I was diagnosed with cancer. The diagnosis and prognosis do not matter,

but my treatment included surgery, chemotherapy and radiation. I endured many hours of sickness and pain to give myself the best chance for long term survival. I have been changed forever by my diagnosis and treatment. There is no part of me that isn't different now than it was the day before my diagnosis. Being a cancer patient is a deep, constant reminder of your brief, fragile moment in this world. You are surrounded by people who are struggling mightily in the face of their disease. You spend time with your mortality, appreciating that with this struggle you can choose to embrace your brief time in this dimension or fight against its end. Spending a week at the Ranch in 2018, I had the chance to see it through the eyes of someone on a new path. I have walked through the valley of the shadow, and it has given me a new lens. Cancer has given me a deeper appreciation for the places that we go to be refilled. Ring Lake is the most profound place of refilling for me. I had the opportunity to hike up to Little Whiskey by myself while I was at the ranch this summer. Hiking in silent solitude is one of the most deeply calming and rejuvenating activities for me. Returning to my

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pre-treatment levels of physical activity has been a harder struggle than I had thought it would be. During the ascent, I had to stop numerous times to just breathe. To finally reach the expanse of the big open meadow and sit in the absolute silence brought to mind the closing sentence of one of my favorite poems, Wendell Berry's "The Peace of Wild Things": "For a time,

I rest in the grace of the world, and am free." What a blessed freedom this place gives to me. When I return monthly to the infusion center, or go in for more surgery this winter, I will return to those wind-swept mountains in my mind and be free. I am reminded that I am small, and on this vast and amazing planet I am walking a path that has been walked by so many

before me. It is Ring Lake Ranch and its surrounding wilderness that is my still water when I need a refuge from all that I have endured. Through which lens did you see the ranch this year? It is a place of so many different things for so many people. Which wild place brings you peace when you need calm from the storm?

New RLR Website Design

Ring Lake Ranch has a freshly-redesigned website – still to be found at www.ringlake.org - with a more dynamic design, more photographs, and a new registration page that we hope will be easier to complete. Please have a look and let us know what you think! Many thanks to Natalie Kight and Amanda Cranert of the University of Indianapolis, as well as their instructor and RLR board member Steve Koehn, for all of their help in building the new site. We also offer our gratitude to Sean Roche for the many years he ran the website for us and for his help in making this transition to the new site.



The Ring Lake Ranch Carillon

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RLR Board of Directors

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Wrangling your Taxes

By Mike McKee*

Recent changes in the tax code have created a great opportunity to support Ring Lake Ranch and further reduce your income tax liability. If you have reached that legally magical age of 70 ½, you will soon need to make a required minimum distribution (RMD) from your IRA. However, by cinching your saddle and riding through the tax code wilderness you can send Uncle Sam away empty-handed and instead further enrich the Ring Lake Ranch experience! The increased standard deduction for 2018 means that many taxpayers will no longer itemize their deductions and a direct gift to a qualified charity will not result in any reduction in taxable income. However, if the charitable gift is made directly from an IRA, the amount of the gift (up to \$100,000 per taxpayer per year) is excluded from the taxpayer's income whether or not the taxpayer itemizes. For a taxpayer in the 25% tax bracket, a direct contribution of \$5,000 from an IRA to a qualified charity will likely reduce their income tax bill by \$1,250. Qualifying gifts must be made by December 31 and must be made directly from the taxpayer's IRA account to the charity. Please consult with your IRA custodian or professional tax advisor for analysis of how much savings you may anticipate by making such a gift.

**Barnet M. McKee is an attorney and vice president of the Ring Lake Ranch Board of Directors and intends the foregoing as general information only and does not intend to give legal advice to anyone. Readers are directed to consult with their own professional tax advisor for further information and advice relevant to their particular situation.*



Ring Lake Ranch Follows Me Wherever I Go

By Mike McKee

I suspect that I am not unlike many Ranch guests who, after a dozen or more trips to the sacred wilderness by Whiskey Mountain, have innumerable items from the gift shop in their cabinets, closets and on their desks. I'm drinking from a Ranch cup as I write, wearing a Ranch shirt (it's my favorite) and I had some Wyoming honey for breakfast. For long-time Ranch visitors, a kind of fusion reaction begins where anticipation of the next visit, memories of previous visits and all the Ranch items and clothing combine to create sacred energy. What each person does with that energy is, of course, different, but the process is the same and it follows you wherever you go. That is the whole point of the Ranch experience, the point that Andy makes explicitly at the end of every session. Fifty years ago, the Ranch was born as an unlikely dream, has improbably survived financially and is only now beginning to reach the critical mass necessary to secure the future. Miraculously, the Ranch has not been pulled from its course by outside forces and events. Rather, the Ranch has remained central, and imparts a strong and self-conscious understanding of that centrality, to the lives of hundreds

of people who open themselves, time and again, to the spiritual presence emanating from the land itself. I am reminded of that TV commercial which tells viewers never to travel first class because it forever ruins travelling in coach. I suspect that you, like most Ranch visitors, are involved in many other communities with spiritual dimensions such as church, school, workplace, and charitable organizations. To be sure, those places will always be important, but if you are like me, your experiences at the Ranch show you how all other communities sometimes fall just a little bit short of a First-Class Spiritual Experience. Oh, and I don't need to remind you that going First Class does cost a little more. Your capital campaign gifts and annual contributions make the Ranch experience better for all and available to those who otherwise might not be able to come. If you are able, please consider giving generously. I hope to see you for many years to come on the trail, in the stream, on horseback, or at a dining hall table (and occasionally cleaning up in the dish room). It's never too soon, and always the right time, to start packing for the Ranch.

Ring Lake Ranch 2019 Schedule of Programs

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May 26–June 1: Volunteer Week

Every year, the Ranch relies on volunteers to clean, do major repair and upkeep projects and anything else needed to prepare for guests. Please consider joining us for a week of work, fun, and fellowship!



Scholarships Available

Scholarship assistance is available, particularly for first-time guests to Ring Lake Ranch. Please contact Andy Blackmun at andy@ringlake.org for more information or to request our simple scholarship application.



June 30 • July 6: Loyd Allen - The Celtic Way for Post-Modern Pilgrims

Celtic spirituality, a distinctive Christian way that flourished from the fifth to the twelfth centuries on the far western edge of Europe, is experiencing a revival in the first decades of the twenty-first century. The Celtic way speaks profoundly to a post-modern age looking for faith beyond rationalism, provincial narrowness, and unearthly pieties. These sessions will explore the spiritual treasures of the Celtic movement through a chronological virtual pilgrimage alongside its most revered saints, taking time to connect their teachings and practices to today's world. **Loyd Allen** is Sylvan Hills Professor of Church History and Spiritual Formation at McAfee School of Theology, as well as a spiritual director and retreat leader. He has served as faculty for the Academy of Spiritual Formation since 2002. He spent a sabbatical learning about and experiencing the Celtic spirituality heritage of Wales, and has led several Celtic pilgrimages



July 14 • 20: Anne Broyles and Larry Peacock - Parenting for Peace, Prayer and Justice

Hectic schedules, rising fears, and social upheaval place extraordinary pressures on families and intergenerational communities. This week we will look at families as a forming center, finding ways to live as peacemakers, and shaping communities of compassion, contemplation and hope. All ages are welcome for interactive time together. **Anne Broyles** retired from the United Methodist ministry to write fulltime. She has published numerous books on the Christian spiritual life, including *This Too Shall Pass: Keeping Faith During*



Tough Times, and *Growing Together in Love: God Known Through Family Life*. Her children's books include *Priscilla and the Hollyhocks* and *Arturo and the Navidad Birds*. **Larry J. Peacock** is the Director of the Franciscan Spiritual Center in Milwaukie, Oregon. He has published numerous articles and books on spirituality, prayers and liturgies, including *Openings – A Daybook of Saints, Sages, Psalms and Prayer Practice*. Both Anne and Larry were Parenting for Peace and Justice trainers for many years.



July 21 • August 3: Carrie Newcomer and Faith Kirkham Hawkins Life Abundant and Sacred; Exploring the Stories that Save Us

Stories that enable us to understand our experiences are sacred - whether canonical or not - because they help us place our lives in larger context. (Re) discovering ways that stories and other texts give meaning to our lives, we'll explore communal sacred texts like the Bible and also the personally sacred stories that form an individual's canon. We'll consider what it means when familiar stories no longer serve us and explore ways of moving forward with stories from unexpected places. We will use music, poetry, spiritual texts, and creative practices for individual exploration, group conversation, and silent reflection.

Carrie Newcomer has released fifteen acclaimed albums and leads workshops internationally on songwriting, creative writing, activism and spiritual vocation. She has collaborated with a wide range of artists and writers, including Alison Krauss, sarod master Amjad Ali Khan, and Parker Palmer. **Faith Hawkins** is an administrator at Indiana University who also taught at Gustavus Adolphus College and Candler School of Theology. Hawkins writes fiction and non-fiction about how daily life is shaped by, and shapes, our experience of the sacred.



Aug 4 • Aug 10: Emilie Townes and Laurel Schneider - Can We Talk?

How do we have conversations across difference in this conflict-ridden time in our nation and the world? Conversations across difference occur on every level—from the intimate to the international. We will explore challenges and possibilities for being better prepared to meet differences as gift and growth. **Laurel C. Schneider** is a theologian focused on the relationship between ideas of divinity and practices of peace and justice. She is Professor of Religious Studies and affiliated with the Women's & Gender Studies Program at Vanderbilt University. She is the author of *Beyond Monotheism: A Theology of Multiplicity* and co-author of *Awake to the Moment: Introducing Constructive Theology*. **Emilie M. Townes** is the Dean and E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Professor of Womanist Ethics and Society at Vanderbilt University Divinity School. She is the author of four books including *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil*. Townes was elected a Fellow in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2009.



August 11 • August 17 Eric Smith Paul the Progressive:

Paul was a misogynistic, homophobic, anti-Semitic, pro-slavery prudish hijacker of Christianity, who turned Jesus' message of love and grace into one of debt, sin, and guilt. Or was he? Drawing on the latest insights from biblical scholarship, this seminar will take a fresh look at Paul. We'll examine each one of these claims--that Paul marginalized women, that he opposed same-sex relationships, that he was anti-Semitic, that he was pro-slavery, and that he was the originator of the guilt-and-shame-based system of salvation--and at each turn we will see that Paul has been misunderstood and misrepresented. When read this way, Paul emerges as a person of his time and place, but also as a beacon of modern progressive Christian values. **Eric Smith** teaches the history of Christianity and biblical studies at the Iliff School of Theology. His research focuses on the art, architecture, and communal life of early Christianity. Smith is an ordained minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) with ministry experience in the UMC and UCC, as well.



August 18 • 24: Susan Sparks The Healing Power of Humor

Voltaire wrote, "God is a comedian playing to an audience who is afraid to laugh." Laughter is one of God's most powerful, yet under-appreciated gifts. It can reduce stress, improve health, build relationships, foster forgiveness, awaken our spiritual connections and inspire hope. This retreat is for anyone who wants to lighten their perspective, focus their energies, enrich their spiritual life, and tap the power of their innate sense of joy. Join us for a week of laughter and learning of the healing power of humor. **Susan Sparks** is the senior pastor of Madison Avenue Baptist Church in New York City. She is also a professional comedian touring nationally with a Rabbi and a Muslim in Peace Tour. Her work with humor, healing, and spirituality has been featured in *O (The Oprah) Magazine*, *The New York Times*, and on national television networks. Susan's first book, *Laugh Your Way to Grace: Reclaiming the Spiritual Power of Humor*, was named one of the best spiritual books of 2010. **Session is full; Wait list only, please.**



August 25 • 31: Adam Russell Taylor Faithful Action to Rebuild the Beloved Community

Deep divisions in our nation's politics pose a threat to both the unity and witness of the church. In these perilous times, how can churches and people of faith engage in social and political change without compromising their faith? How can we serve as a bridge to heal our divisions while also being a courageous voice to combat injustice and build the beloved community? We will reflect on the biblical call to justice and discuss ways in which civic engagement represents a critical part of Christian discipleship. We will address how to avoid some of the pitfalls and discuss principles and concrete tools to promote justice and reconciliation across our communities. **Rev. Adam Russell Taylor** is the Executive Director of Sojourners and author of *Mobilizing Hope: Faith-Inspired Activism for a Post-Civil Rights Generation*. Taylor previously led the Faith Initiative at the World Bank Group and served as the Vice President of Advocacy at World Vision U.S.



Sept. 1 • Sept. 7 Kathleen Dean Moore The World in Our Hands

We know now that the future of creation is threatened by mass extinction and climate chaos. Our calling is to renounce destructive worldviews and to imagine into existence new, life-enhancing, beauty-drenched ways of life. Can we create a powerful new discourse about the future, based on the gifts that imagination gives: empathy, moral courage, and a vision of what the world can be if we change now? In this session, we will confront our peril, obliterate our obstacles, gather our courage, summon our communities, and reclaim our laughter and joy for the work ahead. That work is nothing less than envisioning how humans can claim their full humanity as members of a complex, interdependent, beautiful, and long-lasting planetary whole. **Kathleen Dean Moore** is a philosopher, climate activist, and the author of the books *Riverwalking*, *Wild Comfort*, *Moral Ground: Ethical Action for a Planet in Peril* and *Piano Tide*, a "savagely funny" novel.



Staff Assistants

The Ranch also benefitted from the work of great young people as staff assistants during our 2018 season. Thanks very much to Zoe Kinnard, Beau Bryant, Olivia Pratt, and Elizabeth Blackmun for all of your hard work around the Ranch.

We invite young people between the ages of 13 and 18 who have been to RLR at least once to apply to be staff assistants for our 2019 season. We ask staff assistants to work between 20 and 30 hours per week. In return, staff assistants receive room, board and a small stipend during their stay. Depending on rooming arrangements, staff assistants usually stay for one or two weeks; more weeks may be available at the discretion of the Director. The work ranges from helping in the kitchen and dining hall to assisting in the gift shop to helping with wrangling chores. Teenagers interested in working as staff assistants should contact Andy Blackmun at andy@ringlake.org or 888-458-5253.

Appreciation for the 2018 RLR Volunteers

Our volunteers for 2018 were, as always, an essential part of the Ring Lake Ranch experience. Volunteer Week welcomed Alice and Fred Nicol, Renette and Ted Laase, Becky and Harold Walker, David Henderson, Ryan Collins, Jeff and Will Reed, Dan Hauck, Dwight Haberman, Mike Morris, Mike McKee, Ken Blumer, Nancy Webb, and Dewitt Daggett. For once, we didn't have one large project that required everyone's attention, but there was still plenty to do. The crew helped complete gutter, bathroom, and foundation repairs to Lake Lodge, cleaned and restocked furniture in cabins 7A and 7B after their spring renovation, repaired windows, window screens, and screen doors, set up the Gift Shop, reorganized the Ranch office, cleaned and stained the Dining Hall chairs and benches, designed a new RLR sign for the highway turnoff, cleaned and prepped cabins, and checked trails and fences for needed repairs.

Volunteers also provided all sorts of support throughout the season. Thanks to Mike Morris, Jean and Bill Wolfe, Janet and Mark Kami, Debbie Horton, Dori Nichols, Monroe Wright, Hakan Devrim, Gretchen Williams, Kathi Belknap, Jean Reed, Becky Brown, Kari and Ryan Collins, Lyn Chan, Sabrina George, Joan and Debra McNamara, Chesie Lee, Amy Mears and Jami Anderson for their help as volunteers in a variety of capacities throughout the season.

Volunteers are vital to continuing the Ranch experience for everyone. Please consider joining us, either during our 2019 Volunteer Week, May 26th – June 1st or during one of our sessions. Contact Andy Blackmun at andy@ringlake.org or call him at 888-458-5253 to sign up or ask any questions.

2019 Registration

2019 RATES

All rates are per person and based on double/multiple occupancy.

Includes lodging • meals • seminars • horseback riding • guided hiking • boating.

No charge for children 12 & under.

Scholarships are available:

Contact Andy Blackmun at andy@ringlake.org or 888-458-5253 toll free

ADULT FEES FOR 6 DAY SESSIONS

Basic cabin with shared bath.....	\$963
Basic lodging with private bath	\$1095
Large Family cabin with private bath.....	\$1143

YOUTH FEES FOR 6 DAY SESSIONS

Youth (ages 13 – 17)	\$729
Child (ages 12 and under).....	no charge

ADULT FEES FOR 2 CONSECUTIVE SESSIONS

Basic lodging with shared bath	\$ 1681
Basic lodging with private bath	\$ 1916
Large Family cabin with private bath.....	\$ 1990

YOUTH FEES FOR 2 CONSECUTIVE SESSIONS

Youth (ages 13 – 17)	\$ 1258
Child (ages 12 and under).....	no charge

*

Please note: For Newcomer/Hawkins session we will be charging a \$100/adult fee to cover meals and staff expenses for the weekend stay

All fees exclude sales & lodging taxes. Contact Amanda at amanda@ringlake.org or 307-455-2663 to inquire about daily and off-season rates. To guarantee a private room, contact Amanda about additional fee & availability.

Receive a 10% discount on your session fees by bringing someone new to the Ranch with you.

Please indicate on your registration form who the new guest is. When they register, we'll record the discount. Thank you for spreading the word about Ring Lake Ranch.

Deposit:

To hold your reservations, we request a deposit of \$270/adult and \$160/youth for 6 day sessions or \$470/adult and \$270/youth for two sessions. The deposit is refundable (less a 20% handling charge) up to 60 days in advance of the session for which you have registered. After that time, the deposit is refundable (less 20%) only if we can rebook your space in the session.

No. of Registrants:

_____ Adults @ rate	\$_____
_____ Youth (13-17)	\$_____
_____ Children(12 & under)	no charge
TOTAL (without taxes)	\$_____
Deposit Amount	\$_____

Session

Dates _____

Registrant Name(s) _____

Names & ages of children (if applicable) _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Home Phone () _____ Work Phone () _____

Cell () _____ Email _____

Accommodation preference:

- Basic/shared bath Basic/private bath
 Large Family/private bath Cabin #

Roommate preference (registering separately)

- King Bed? Twin Beds?

Is walking over steep or rough terrain difficult for you?

- Yes No

Any other physical limitations? _____

Dietary restrictions/food allergies: _____

Will you need transportation from the airport?

(see spring Carillon or website for charges)

- No Yes Jackson/Riverton

How did you hear about Ring Lake Ranch?

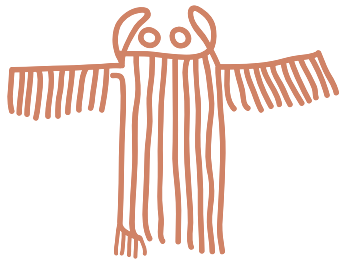
Signature _____

Date _____

We accept Visa, Mastercard and Discover. Pay by cash or your personal check and receive a 5% discount in fees. For security purposes, please do not include your credit card number on this form. Please use the online store at www.ringlake.org/store to pay deposits and fees.

Return form to:

Ring Lake Ranch (888) 458-5253 toll free
 P.O. Box 806 (307) 455-2663
 Dubois, WY 82513 amanda@ringlake.org
www.ringlake.org



RING LAKE RANCH

P.O. Box 806 • Dubois, WY 82513

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La Crosse, WI

Come join us at Ring Lake Ranch for “renewal in sacred wilderness.”



For more information about our programs and the Ranch community, please visit our website: www.ringlake.org